

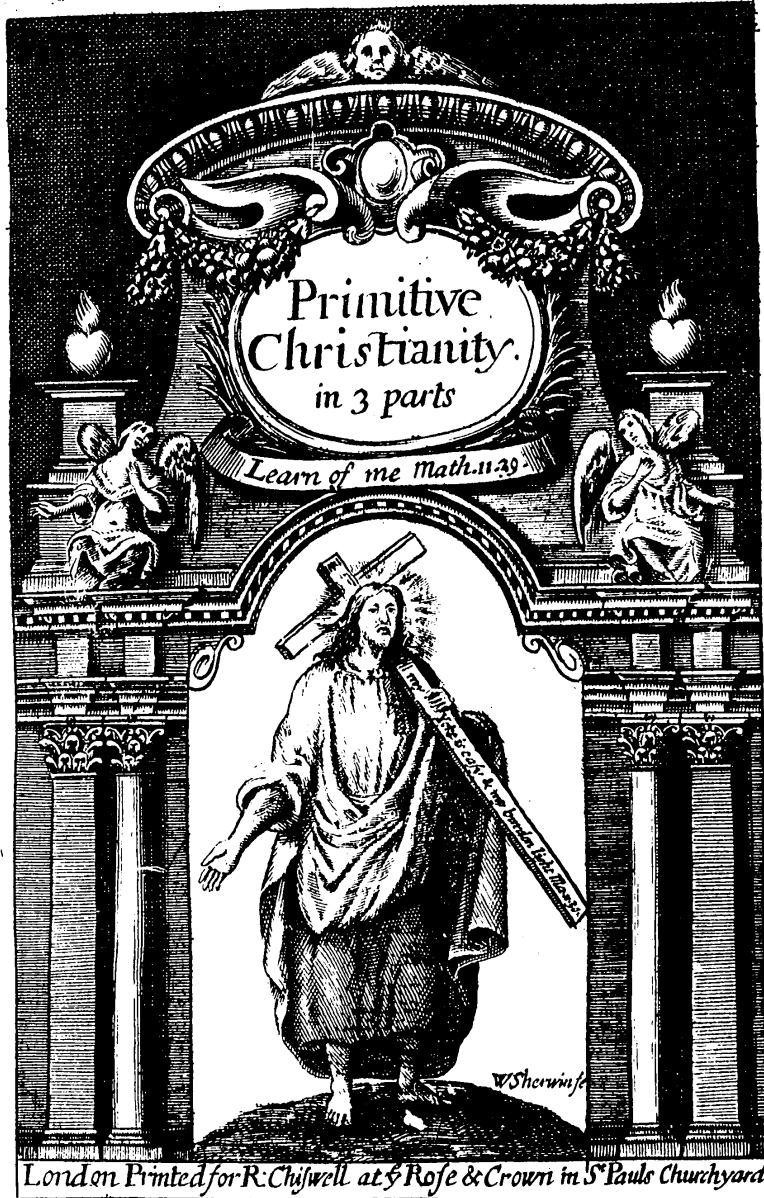
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# IMPRIMATUR

Sam. Parker *Reverendissimo*  
*in Christo Patri ac Domino,*  
*Domino Gilberto Archiep.*  
*Cantuar. à sac. dom.*

Ex *Ædibus Lambeth.*  
*Septemb. 12. 1672.*

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Primitive Christianity :  
OR, THE  
RELIGION  
Of the Ancient  
Christians  
In the first Ages  
OF THE  
GOSPEL.

In Three Parts.

By WILLIAM CAVE, D D.

Ὅτι ἐν λόγοις, ἀλλ' ἐν ἔργοις τὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας θεοσεβείας  
περιγυμνάσθαι. Just. Mart. Parænet. ad Græc. p. 33.  
Nos non habitu Sapientiam, sed mente præferimus:  
Non eloquimur magna, sed vivimus.  
Minuc. Fæc. dial. pag. 31.

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. M. for Richard Chiswell at the Rose  
and Crown in S. Paul's Church-yard. 1675.



TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND  
FATHER in GOD  
NATHANAEL,

Lord Bishop of  
OXFORD,  
And Clerk of the Closet to his  
MAJESTY.



My Lord,

**W**hen I first designed  
that these Papers  
should take sanctu-  
ary at your Lord-  
ships Patronage, the Hebrew Pro-  
verb presently came into my mind,  
A 4 Keep

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

רבוק Keep close to a great man, and  
 שמוון men will reverence thee. I knew  
 שמוון  
 77 no better way (next to the innocen-  
 Berefch. cy, and, if it may be, usefulness of  
 Rab. cap. the subject I have undertaken) to  
 17. ap. Druf. A- secure my self from the censures of  
 dag. Ebra- ic. Decur. envy and ill nature, than by putting  
 6. Adag. 8. my self under your protection, whose  
 known worth, the sweetness and ob-  
 ligingness of whose temper is able to  
 render malice it self candid and fa-  
 vourable. Encouraged also by this  
 consideration, I hardned my self into  
 the confidence of this Address, which  
 I had not otherwise attempted, but  
 that your Lordships kindness and  
 generous compassion, and the mighty  
 condescention wherewith you were al-  
 ways pleased to treat me (while I had  
 the happiness of your Lordships  
 neighbourhood) did at once invite  
 and oblige me to it. I say no more,  
 lest I should affront that modesty  
 that is so innate to your temper, or  
 come

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

come within the least suspicion of  
 flattery, so repugnant to my own.

One thing only there is, which I  
 cannot but remark, the great honour  
 which your Lordship has done, not  
 to the Episcopal only, but to the  
 whole ministerial order, that a person  
 of your Rank and Education would  
 stoop to an employment, so little va-  
 lued and regarded in this unthank-  
 ful and degenerate Age. And herein  
 your Lordship has been a happy Pre-  
 cedent; your example being already  
 followed by some, and will shortly  
 by more persons of Noble Descent  
 and Pedigree: a thing for which the  
 Church of England was never more  
 renowned, since the Reformation, than  
 it is at this day.

My Lord,

There was a time within the com-  
 pass of our memory, when the Bishops  
 amongst other things were accused  
 (by

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

Church-  
Hist. lib.  
II. p. 183.

(by one of the House of Peers, though one that had not the most reason to bring in a charge of that nature) to be in respect of their Parentage *de fæce populi*, of the very dregs and refuse of the people (*malice will play at small games, rather than not at all.*) A charge as false as it was spiteful: though had it been true, it had been impertinent; seeing the very order is enough to deriue honour upon the person, even when he cannot as your Lordship, bring it along with him. And indeed so honourable an Order has Episcopacy ever been accounted, even when there have been no visible advantages, either of riches or grandeur to attend it, as there were not in the more early Ages of Christianity, that persons of the greatest Birth and Fortunes have not thought it below them to exchange the Civil Tribunal for the Bishops Throne, and to lay down the publick

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

lick Rods and Axes, to take up the Crozier and the Pedum Pastorale. If we may credit that Catalogue of the Bishops of Constantinople recorded by Nicephorus, we find Dometius, Brother to the Emperour Probus, and after him his two Sons, Probus and Metrophanes, successively sitting in that Chair: As afterwards Nectarius, S. Chrysostoms Predecessor, was of a Senator made Bishop of that See. Thalassius became Bishop of Cæsarea, when he was a Senator, the Præfectus Prætorio (or the Emperours Lieutenant, one of the highest places both of trust and honour in the Roman Empire) of Illyricum, and rising to greater dignities, being designed by the Emperour for the Government of the East. S. Ambrose (whose Father was an illustrious person, the Præfect of France) was made Governour of Liguria and Æmilia, and sent thither with Consular

H. Eccles.  
lib. 8. c. 6.  
p. 341.

### The Epistle Dedicatory.

ular power and dignity, during which employment he was made Bishop of Milain. Petronius Bishop of Bononia is said to have been first a Præfectus Prætorio, and to descend of the Family of Constantine the Great. Sidonius Apollinaris descended for many Generations of noble and illustrious Parents, his Father the Præfectus Prætorio of Gaul, himself Son-in-Law to Avitus (a person of extraordinary honour and employment, and afterwards Consul and Emperour) and yet in the midst of this disdained not to become Bishop of Clermont in France. More such instances I could give, not to speak of multitudes that were in the middle and later Ages of the Church, especially in our own Nation. But I return.

My Lord,

I beheld Religion generally laid waste, and Christianity ready to draw

### The Epistle Dedicatory.

draw its last brèath, stifled and oppressed with the vices and impieties of a debauched and profligate Age. To contribute towards the recovery whereof, and the reducing things (if possible) to the ancient Standard, is the design of the Book that is here offered to you. The subject I assure my self is not unsuitable either to your Lordships Order, temper, or course of life; if my ill managery of it has not rendred it unworthy of your Patronage. However such as it is, it's humbly presented by him who is

Your Lordships

faithfully devoted Servant

WILLIAM CAVE.

THE

THE  
P R E F A C E  
TO THE  
R E A D E R.

I Know not whether it may be any satisfaction to the curiosity of the Reader, to understand the birth and original of these *Papers*; if it be, let him take this account. No sooner did I arrive at years capable of discerning, but I began to enquire into the grounds of that Religion, into which I had been baptized: which I soon found to be so noble and excellent, in all its *laws* so just and rational, in all its *designs* so divine and heavenly, so perfective of the *Principles*, so conducive to the *happiness* of humane nature; a Religion so *worthy* of God, so *advantageous* to man, built upon such firm and uncontroulable evidence, back'd with such proper and powerful arguments that I was presently convinc'd of the *Divinity* that resided in it, and concluded with my self  
(and

## The Preface.

(and I thought I had reason so to do) that surely the Disciples of this Religion must needs be the most excellent persons in the world. But alas a few years experience of the world let me see, that this was the conclusion of one that had convers'd only with Books, and the reasonings of his own mind. I had not been long an observer of the manners of men, but I found them generally so debauched and vicious, so corrupt and contrary to the rules of this holy Religion, that if a modest and honest *Heathen* was to estimate Christianity by the lives of its Professors, he would certainly proscribe it as the vilest Religion in the world. Being offended hereat, I resolved to *stand in the ways and see, and enquire for the good old way, the Paths wherein the ancient Christians walk'd:* for I could not think that this had always been the unhappy fate and portion of Christianity; and that if the footsteps of true Christian piety and simplicity were any where to be found, it must be in those times, *when (as S. Hierom notes) the blood of Christ was yet warm in the breasts of Christians, and the faith and spirit of Religion more brisk and vigorous.*

Quando  
Domini nostri  
adhuc  
calebat  
crux, &  
fervebat  
recens in  
scedentibus  
fides.  
Hieron. ad  
Demetr.  
p. 68. tom.  
1.

In pursuance of this design, I set myself

## The Preface.

self to a more close and diligent reading of the first Fathers and ancient monuments of the Church than ever I had done before, especially for the *three or four first Centures*, for much lower I did not intend to go, because the life and spirit of Christianity did then visibly decline apace; noting as I went along whatever contributed to my satisfaction in this affair. Had I consulted my own ease and quiet, I might have gone a nearer way to work, and have taken up with what I could have pick'd up of this nature in *Baronius, the Centuries, &c.* But I could not satisfy myself (and I presume it would as little have satisfied the Reader) with shreds, with things taken upon trust, and borrowed at the second hand. For the same reason I made little use of the *Lives* of the *Saints*, (especially in such instances whereof there was the least cause to doubt) and the spurious and supposititious Writings of the Fathers, seldom making use of any but such as are of unquestionable credit and authority. And because the testimony of an enemy is ever accounted of great moment and regard, I have been careful to add the testimonies that have been given to Christians and to

their

## The Preface.

their Religion by the known and professed Adversaries of the Christian Faith; such as *Pliny, Lucian, Porphyry, Julian, &c.* more whereof we might have been furnished with, had those Writings of theirs against the Christian Religion been extant, which the zeal of the first Christian Princes industriously banished out of the world. What other Authors of later date I have borrowed any light from in this discourse, I have faithfully produced in the margin. Two Books indeed I met with, which at first sight I well hoped would have wholly saved me the labour of this search; the one

*A modest Discourse of the piety, charity, and policy of elder Times and Christians, &c. by Edw. Waterhouse, Esq; Lond. 1655.*

*Paganin. Gaudentius de vita Christianorum ante tempora Constantini. Florent. 1639. quarto.*

written by a person of our own Nation; the other by a *Florentine* of great name and note: but my hopes were very much frustrated in both. For the first, I no sooner looked into it, but found my self wretchedly imposed

upon by the Title, his *Elder times and Christians* (not to say any thing of his intermixtures of things nothing to his purpose) seldom reaching any higher than the *middle-Ages* of the Church, little or nothing being remark'd of the  
*first*

## The Preface.

*first Ages* of Christianity, the only thing I aimed at. For the other (which I met not with till I had almost finished this search) I found it miserably thin and empty, containing little else but short glosses upon some few passages out of *Tertullian*, from whence I did not enrich my self with any one observation, which I had not made before. There is indeed an Epistle of *Fronto's* the learned Chancellor of the *University of Paris* concerning this Affair; but it contains only some general intimations, and seems to have been designed by him (as appears from that, and some other of his Epistles) as the ground-work of a larger and more particular discourse. But his death happening some few years after the date of that Epistle, cut off all hopes of prosecuting so excellent a design. These are all that I know of, who have attempted any thing in this subject, none whereof coming up to the curiosity of my design, I was forced to resume the task I had undertaken, and to go on with it through those ancient Writers of the Church; the result of which search is laid together in this Book.

Whether I have discharged my self herein to the satisfaction of the Reader,

*De vita & moribus Christianorum, &c. Par. 1660: quarto.*

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I know not; sure I am, I have endeavoured what I propounded to my self, viz. a *Specimen of Primitive Christianity*, in some of the most considerable branches and instances of Religion. Here he will find a *Piety* active and zealous, shining through the blackest clouds of malice and cruelty; afflicted *innocence* triumphant, notwithstanding all the powerful or politick attempts of men or Devils; a *patience* unconquerable under the biggest persecutions; a *charity* truly *Catholic* and unlimited; a *simplicity* and upright carriage in all transactions; a *sobriety* and *temperance* remarkable to the admiration of their enemies; and in short, he will here see the divine and holy Precepts of the Christian Religion drawn down into action, and the most excellent *genius* and spirit of the Gospel breathing in the hearts and lives of these good old Christians. Here he will find a real and evident confutation of that senseless and absurd *calumny*, that was fastned upon Christianity, as if it required no more than an *ease* and *credulous* temper of mind; as if under a pretence of kindness and indulgence to sinners, it ministered to all vice and wickedness. *Celsus* confidently begins the

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the charge. *There be some amongst the Christians* (says he) *that will neither give nor receive a reason of their faith, who are wont to cry out, don't examine, but believe; and, thy faith will save thee; the wisdom of this world is evil, but foolishness good and useful.*

ομοι δὲ τινες μηδε βυλο-  
μένους διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν  
λόγον ὅτι οὐ πιστεύουσιν,  
χεῖν δὲ πρὸς μὴ ἐξετάζει,  
ἀλλὰ πιστεύουσιν. Καὶ, ἡ πί-  
στις σε σώζει σε. Καὶ, κα-  
κὸν ἢ ἐν πρὸ κόσμῳ σοφία,  
ἀγαθὸν δ' ἡ μωρία. Orig.  
adv. Cels. lib. 1. p. 8. vid.  
lib. 6. p. 282.

*Julian* carries on the charge somewhat higher, as if the Christian Religion were not only content with a naked and an empty Faith, but gave encouragement to sin, by assuring its most desperate *Profelytes* of an easie pardon. In the conclusion of his *Cæsars*, after he had assigned the *Roman* Emperours their particular *Tutelar* Deities, he delivers over *Constantine the Great*, the first *Christian* Emperour, to the *Goddeſs* of *Pleasure*, who having effeminately trick'd and dress'd him up, brought him to the *Goddeſs* *Aſotia* or intemperance, where he finds τὸν υἱόν, *his Son*, *Constantius* probably (for the passage is a little disturbed and obscure, for which reason probably the Translator passed it by, and took no notice of it) making this



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ὅστις φθορεὺς, ἢ τις μιαιφόνος, ἢ τις ἐναγής, ἢ βδελυγός, ἢ τὸ θαρρύν, ὡφραυὺς γὰρ αὐτὸν τῷ τῷ πρὸ ὕδατος λούσας, αὐτίκα καθαρεύ. καὶ πάλιν ἐροῦν τοῖς αὐτοῖς γίνεσθαι, ὥστε τὸ εὐδοκίαν, καὶ τὸ πλῆξαι, καὶ τὸ κεφαλῇ παλῆξαι, καθαροὺς γίνεσθαι. *Julian. Caesares.*  
p. 53.

universal Proclamation, *Whoever is an adulterer, or a murderer, whoever is an impure profligate wretch, let him come boldly, for I declare that being washed in this water [Baptism] he shall immediately be cleansed: yea, although he again commit those sins, let him but knock his breast, and beat his head, and I will*

*make him clean.* Much to the same purpose *Zosimus* (as good a friend to Christianity as either of the former) spitefully charges it upon *Constantine* the Great, that being haunted with the conscience of his prodigious Villanies, and having no hopes given him by the *Gentile Priests* of the expiation of his crimes,

πᾶσις ἀμαρτίαν ἀναγνῶντι εἶναι τὸ τῶν Χριστιανῶν διαβεβαιώσατο δόξαν. καὶ τὸτο ἔχεν ἐπαγγελίαν, τὸ τὸν ἀσεβῆτα μελαμβρόν. ἵας αὐτῆς, πᾶσις ἀμαρτίας ἔξω παρὰ χεῖρα καθίσταται. *Zosim. Hist. lib. 2.*  
p. 534.

embraced Christianity, being told, that in the Christian Religion *there was a promise of cleansing from all sin, and that as soon as ever any closed with it, pardon would be granted to the most profligate offenders.* As if Christianity had been nothing else but

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but a *Receptacle* and *Sanctuary* for *Rogues* and *Villains*, where the worst of men might be wicked under hopes of pardon. But how false and groundless (especially as urged and intended by them) this impious charge was, appears from the whole design and tenour of the Gospel, and that more than ordinary vein of piety and strictness that was conspicuous in the lives of its first professors, whereof we have in this Treatise given abundant evidence.

To this representation of their lives and manners, I have added some account concerning the ancient Rites and Usages of the Church; wherein if any one shall meet with something that does not jump with his own humour, he will I doubt not have more discretion than to quarrel with me for setting down things as I found them. But in this part I have said the less, partly because this was not the thing I primarily designed, partly because it has been done by others in just Discourses. In some few instances I have remarked the *corruption* and *degeneracy* of the Church of Rome, from the *purity* and *simplicity* of the ancient Church; and more I could easily have added, but that I studiously avoided

## The Preface.

Prefat. in  
 Hilar. O-  
 per.

controversies, it being no part of my  
 design to enquire, what was the judg-  
 ment of the Fathers in disputable cases,  
 especially the more abstruse and intri-  
 cate speculations of Theology, but what  
 was their practice, and by what rules  
 and measures they did govern and con-  
 duct their lives. The truth is, their  
*Creed* in the first Ages was *short* and  
*simple*, their Faith lying then (as *Era-*  
*mus* observes) not so much in *nice* and  
*numerous* Articles, as in a *good* and an  
*holy* life. At the end of the Book I have  
 added a Chronological *Index* of the  
*Authors*, according to the times wherein  
 they are supposed to have lived, with an  
 account of the *Editions* of their Works  
 made use of in this Treatise. Which I  
 did, not that I had a mind to tell the  
 world, either what, or how many Books  
 I had; a piece of vanity of which had  
 I been guilty, it had been no hard mat-  
 ter to have furnish'd out a much larger  
 Catalogue. But I did it, partly to gra-  
 tifie the request of the Bookseller, part-  
 ly because I conceived it might not be  
 altogether unuseful to the Reader; the  
*Index*, to give some light to the quota-  
 tions, by knowing when the Author  
 lived, especially when he speaks of things  
 done

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done in or near his own time, and  
 which must otherwise have been done  
 at every turn in the body of the Book.  
 And because there are some Writings  
 frequently made use of in this Book, the  
 Authors whereof in this *Index* could be  
 reduced to no certain date, especially  
 those called the *Apostolical Canons* and  
*Constitutions*, it may not be amiss here  
 briefly to take notice of them. And first  
 for the *Canons*; as I am far from their  
 opinion who ascribe them to the *Apo-*  
*stles*, so I think their great Antagonist  
 Mr. *Daillé* bends the stick as much too  
 far the other way, not allowing them a  
 being in the world till the year 500 or a  
*little* before. The truth doubtless lies be-  
 tween these two: 'Tis evident both from  
 the Histories of the Church, and many  
 passages in *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, and o-  
 thers, that there were in the most early  
 Ages of Christianity frequent Synods and  
 Councils for settling the Doctrine and  
 Discipline of the Church, though their  
 determinations under that notion be not  
 extant at this day. Part of these *Syna-*  
*dical* Decrees, so many of them as con-  
 cern'd the Rites and Discipline of the  
 Church, we may conceive some person  
 of learning and judgment gathered to-  
 gether

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gether, probably about the beginning of the third Century, and put them (especially the first *Fifty*, for I look not upon the whole *eighty five* as of equal value and authority) if not into the same, into some such form and method, wherein we now have them; stiling them *Ecclesiastical* or *Apostolical* Canons, not as if they had been composed by the *Apostles*, but either because containing things consonant to the Doctrines and Rules delivered by the *Apostles*, or because made up of usages and traditions supposed to be derived from them, or lastly because made by ancient and *Apostolic* men. That many, if not all, of these Canons were some considerable time extant before the first *Nicene* Council, we have great reason to believe from two or three passages amongst many others. *S. Basil* giving rules about Discipline, appoint a Deacon guilty of Fornication to be deposed, and thrust down into the rank of *Laicks*, and that in that capacity he might receive the Communion, *there being*, says he, ἀρχαῖον κανὼν, an ancient Canon, that they that are deposed should only fall under this kind of punishment; the ancients, as I suppose, following herein that command, *Thou shalt*  
not

*Epist. Canon. ad Amphil. Canon. 3.*

## The Preface.

not punish twice for the same fault: This *Balsamon* joins with the twenty fifth Canon of the *Apostles*, which treats of the very same affair and indeed it cannot in probability be meant of any other, partly because there was no ancient Canon (that we know of) in *S. Basil's* time about this business but that, partly because the same sentence is applied as the reason both in the *Apostolical* and *S. Basil's* Canon, *Thou shalt not punish twice for the same fault*; which clearly shews whence *Basil* had it, and what he understands by his ancient Canon. *Theodoret* records a Letter of *Alexander* Bishop of *Alexandria*, to another of the same name Bishop of *Constantinople* (this Letter was written a little before the Council of *Nice*) where speaking of some Bishops, who had received the *Arians* whom he had excommunicated into Communion, he tells him, that herein they had done what the *Apostolical* Canon did not allow; evidently referring to the twelfth and thirteenth Canon of the *Apostles*, which state the case about one Bishops receiving those into Communion, who had been excommunicated by another. To this let me add, that *Constantine* in a Letter to *Ensebinus*, commends him for refusing to leave his  
OWN  
*H. Eccles. lib. 1. c. 41. p. 5.*  
*De vit. Constant. lib. 3. c. 61. p. 118.*

## The Preface.

own Bilhoprick to go over to that of *Antioch*, to which he was chosen, especially because herein he had exactly observed the rule of Ecclesiastical Discipline, and had kept the commands of God, and the Apostolical and Ecclesiastical Canon, meaning doubtless the fourteenth Apostolick Canon, which treats about such removes. Nay learned men both formerly and of late have observed divers passages in the *Nicene* Canons themselves, which plainly respect these Canons, as might be made appear (notwithstanding what *Daillé* has excepted against it) were this a proper place to discourse of it. This for the Canons.

For the *Constitutions*, they are said to have been composed by *S. Clemens*, at the instance and by the direction of the *Apostles*. And this wild and extravagant opinion has not wanted its Patrons and defenders, *Turrianus*, *Bovius*, &c. but herein deserted by the more modest and moderate of their own party; besides that their *Apostolicallness* (in this sense) is by the learned *Daillé* everlastingly shattered and broken. But then he sets them at too wide a distance, assigning them to the latter end of the fifth Century: when 'tis as clear as the Sun that

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that they were extant, and in credit with many before the times of *Epiphanius* (though somewhat altered now from what they were in his time) compiled probably out of many lesser *Διδασκαλικά* and *Διατάξεις*, Books containing the *Doctrines* and *Rites* that had been delivered and practised by ancient and *Apostolical* persons, or at least vented under their names; but whether, as some conjecture, composed by *Clemens Alexandrinus* (and thence by an easie mistake ascribed to *Clemens Romanus*) I am not at leisure to consider. In this Class of Writers I may reckon *Dionysius the Areopagite*, absurdly enough asserted by many to be genuine, by *Daillé* thrust down to the beginning of the sixth Century: but most probably thought to have been written about the middle of the fourth Age, as a person amongst us deservedly of great name and note has shewn in his late *Vindication* of *Ignatius* Epistles. These are the principal of those Authors, who could not be fix'd upon any certain year: the rest have in the *Index* their particular and respective times. To which I have added the account of the *Editions* for the more ready finding (if occasion be) of any passage quoted out of them.

One

## The Preface.

One thing indeed there is which I cannot but take notice of, it looks so like a piece of vanity and ostentation, that the margin is charged with so many *quotations*: but whoever considers the nature of my design, will quickly see that it was absolutely necessary, and that it concerned me not to deliver any thing without good authority; the reason why I have, where I could, brought them in speaking their own words: though to avoid as much of the charge as was possible, I omitted the citing Authors in their own Languages, and only set them down in *English*, faithfully representing the Authors sense, though not always tying my self to a strict and precise translation. How pertinent my quotations are, the Reader must judge; I hope he will find them exact, being immediately fetched from the fountain-head; here being very few (if any) that have not been examined more than once. For the method into which the Book is cast, I chose that which to me seemed most apt and proper, following *S. Pauls* distribution of Religion into *piety* towards God, *sobriety* towards our selves, and *righteousness* towards others; and accordingly divided the discourse into  
three

## The Preface.

three parts, respecting those three great branches of Religion; though the first is much larger than either of the other, by reason of some *preliminary* Chapters, containing a vindication of the Christians from those crimes that were charged upon them, that so the rubbish being cleared and thrown out of the way, we might have a fairer prospect of their Religion afterwards. The Book I confess is swell'd into a greater bulk, than I either thought of, or desired; but by reason of somewhat a confused Copy never design'd for the *Press*, no certain measures could be taken of it.

And now if after all this, it shall be enquired, why these Papers are made publick, as I can give no very good reason, so I will not trouble my self to invent a bad one. It may suffice to intimate, that this discourse (long since drawn up at leisure hours) lay then by me, when a tedious and uncomfortable distemper (whereby I have been taken off from all *publick* Service, and the prosecution of *severer* studies) gave me too much opportunity to look over my Papers, and this especially, which peradventure otherwise had never seen the light. Indeed I must confess I was somewhat

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what the easlier prevailed with to let this discourse pass abroad, that it might appear, that when I could not do what I ought, I was at least willing to do what I could. If he that reads it, shall reap any delight and satisfaction by it, or be in any measure induced to imitate these primitive virtues, I shall think my pains well bestowed: if not, I am not the first, and probably shall not be the last, that has written a Book to no purpose.

THE

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*Primitive*

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*Primitive Christianity ;*  
OR, THE  
RELIGION  
OF THE  
Ancient Christians  
In the first Ages of the Gospel.

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PART I.

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CHAP. I.

Things charged upon the Primitive  
Christians, respecting their  
Religion.

*Christian Religion likely to meet with op-  
position at its first setting out. Chief-  
ly undermined by Calumnies and Re-  
proaches. Three things by the Heathens  
charged upon the Christians, some things  
B respecting*

Part 1. *respecting their Religion; some their outward condition; others their moral carriage, and the matters of their worship. Their Religion charged with two things, Impiety and Novelty. The charge of Atheism considered, and answered out of the Fathers. The Heathens excepted against, as incompetent judges of the affairs of Christianity. In what sense Christians confessed themselves Atheists. The wretched and absurd ~~Doctrines~~ that were amongst the Heathens; and the impure manner of their worship. Atheism, properly such, disowned and denied by Christians. The account they gave of their Religion, and the God whom they worshipped.*

**N**O sooner did the Son of God appear in the world, to establish the most excellent Religion that ever was communicated to Mankind, but he met with the most fierce and vigorous opposition: persecuted and devoted to death as soon as he was born, followed all his life with fresh assaults of malice and cruelty, his credit traduced and slandered, his Doctrine despised and slighted, and himself at last put to death with the most exquisite arts of torture & disgrace.

And

And if they thus served the Master of the Part 1.  
house, how much more them of the household; the disciple not being above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. Therefore when he gave commission to his Apostles, to publish this Religion to the world, he told them beforehand, what hard and unkind reception they must look to meet with, *that he sent them forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves, that they should be delivered up to the Councils, and scourged in the Synagogues, and be brought before Kings and Governors, and be hated of all men for his names sake; nay so high should the quarrel arise upon the account of Religion, that men should violate some of the nearest Laws of Nature, betray their friends and kinsfolk; the Brother delivering up the Brother to death, and the Father the Child, the Children rising up against their Parents, and causing them to be put to death.* This he well foresaw (and the event truly answered it) would be the fate of its first appearing in the world: and indeed, considering the present state and circumstances of the world at that time, it could not reasonably be expected, that the *Christian Religion* should meet with a better en-

Part I. tertainment; for the genius and nature of its *Doctrine* was such, as was almost impossible to escape the frowns and displeasure of men: a *Doctrine* it was, that call'd men off from lusts and pleasures, and offered violence to their native inclinations, that required the greatest strictness and severity of life, obliged men to *deny themselves, to take up their Cross,* and to *follow* the steps of a poor crucified *Saviour*, and that upon little other encouragement at present, than the invisible rewards of another world. It introduced *new* Rites and Ceremonies, unknown to those of former Ages, and such as did undermine the received and established principles of that *Religion*, that for so many Generations had governed the world; it revealed and brought to light such truths, as were not only contrary to the principles of mens education, but many of them above the reach of natural comprehension, too deep for the line of humane reason to fathom or find out.

Upon these, and such like accounts, Christianity was sure to encounter with mighty *prejudices* and potent opposition; and so it did; for no sooner did it peep abroad in the world, but it was *every where*

*where spoken against*: Princes and Potentates, and the greatest powers and policies of the world, did for some Ages confederate and combine together, to extirpate and banish it out of the world: and certainly, if Arms and Armies, if strength and subtilty, if malice and cruelty could have stifled it, it had been smothered in its infancy and first delivery into the world. But notwithstanding all these oppositions, it still lifted up his head in triumph, and outbrav'd the fiercest storms of persecution; and as *Tertullian* told their Enemies, *by every exquisite act of cruelty, they did but tempt others to come over to the party, the oft-ner they were mowed down, the faster they sprang up again, the blood of Christians making the Churches soil more fat and fertile.* Hereupon the great enemy of mankind, betook himself to other counsels, and sought to undermine, what he saw he could not carry by open assault and battery; he studied to leaven the minds of men with false and unjust prejudices against *Christianity*, and to burden it with whole loads of reproaches and defamations, knowing no speedier way to hinder its *reception*, than to blast its *reputation*. For this purpose all

Part I. the arts of spite and malice were mustred up, and *Christians* confidently charged with all those crimes that could render them and their Religion vile and infamous: Now the things that were charged upon the Christians, were either such as respected their Religion, or such as concern'd their outward state and condition, or such as related to their moral carriage and behaviour, with some things relating to the matter or manner of their Worship; we shall consider them in order, and how the Christians of those times vindicated themselves from these imputations.

The Christian Religion at its first coming abroad into the world, was mainly charged with these two things, **Impiety** and **Idolatry**: For the first, 'twas commonly cryed out against, as a grand piece of *Atheism* and *Impiety*, as an affront to their Religion, and an undermining the very being and existence of their gods; this is the sum of the charge, as we find it in the ancient Apologists; more particularly *Cecilius* the Heathen, in *Minucius Felix* accuses the *Christians* for a desperate undone and unlawful faction, who by way of contempt did *snuff* and *spit* at the mention

7. Martyr.  
Ap. 1. p. 47.  
Athenag.  
Legat. p. 4.  
Arnob. l. 1.  
p. 7.  
Min. Fel.  
p. 7.

of

of their gods, deride their worship, scoff at their Priests, and despise their Temples, as no better than *charnel-houses*, and heaps of bones and ashes of the dead; for these, and such like reasons, the *Christians* were every where accounted a pack of *Atheists*, and their Religion the *Atheism*; and seldom it is that *Julian the Emperor* calls *Christianity* by any other name. Thus *Lucian* bringing in *Alexander* the Impostor setting up for an Oracle-monger, ranks the *Christians* with *Atheists* and *Epicureans*, as those that were especially to be banished from his mysterious Rites. In answer to this charge, the Christians pleaded especially these three things.

First, that the *Gentiles* were for the most part *incompetent* Judges of such cases as these, as being almost wholly ignorant of the true state of the *Christian Doctrine*, and therefore unfit to pronounce sentence against it. Thus when *Crescens* the Philosopher had traduced the *Christians*, as atheistical and irreligious, *Justin Martyr* answers, that he talked about things which he did not understand, feigning things of his own head, only to comply with the humour of his seduc'd disciples and followers; that in re-

Pseudo-  
mant. pa.  
888. tom.  
2.

Just. Mar-  
tyr. loc.  
laud.

Part I. approaching the Doctrine of *Christ*, when he did not understand it, he discovered a most wicked and malignant temper, and shewed himself far worse than the most simple and unlearned, who are not wont rashly to bear witness and determine in things not sufficiently known to them. Or if he did understand its greatness and excellency, then he shewed himself much more base and disingenuous, in charging upon it what he knew to be false, and concealing his inward sentiments and convictions, for fear, lest he should be suspected to be a *Christian*. But *Justin* well knew, that he was miserably unskilful in matters of *Christianity*, having formerly had conferences and disputations with him about these things; and therefore offer'd the *Senate of Rome* (to whom he then presented his *Apology*) if they had not heard the sum of it, to hold another conference with him, even before the *Senate* it self: which he thought would be a work worthy of so wise and grave a Council: or if they had heard it, then he did not doubt, but they clearly apprehended how little he understood these things; or, that if he did understand them, he knowingly dissembled it to his

his Auditors, not daring to own the Part I. truth, as *Socrates* did in the face of danger: an evident argument that he was ὁμιλεῖς, ἀλλὰ φιλόδοξος, not a *Philosopher*, but a slave to popular applause and glory.

Secondly, They did in some sort confess the charge, that according to the vulgar notion which the *Heathens* had of their *Deities*, they were *Atheists*, i. e. 7. Mart. strangers and enemies to them; that the Ap. 2. (Sen. verius 1.) gods of the Gentiles were at best but p. 56. Demons, impure and unclean spirits, who p. 55. had long imposed upon mankind, and by their villanies, sophistries, and arts of terroure, had so affrighted the common people, who knew not really what they were, and who judge of things more by appearance than by reason, that they call'd them gods, and gave to every one of them that name, which the *Dæmon* was willing to take to himself, and that they really were nothing but Devils, fallen and apostate spirits, the *Christians* evidently manifested at every turn, forcing them to the confessing it, while by Prayer and invoking the name of the true God, they drove them out of possessed persons, and therefore they trembled to encounter with a *Christian*,

Part I. as *Octavius* triumphingly tells *Catilius*; *Part I.*  
*Part 23.* that they entertained the most absurd and fabulous notions of their gods, and usually ascrib'd such things to them, as would be accounted an horrible *shame* and *dishonour* to any wise and good man, the Worship and mysterious Rites of many of them being so brutish and filthy, that the honefter and severer *Romans* were ashamed on't, and therefore overturn'd their Altars, and banished them out of the roll of their Deities, though their degenerate posterity took them in again, as *Tertullian* observes; their gods themselves so impure and beastly, their Worship so obscene and detestable, that  
*Apol. 6. 7. p. 7.*  
*de err. prof. Relig. p. 9.* *Julius Firmicus* advises them to turn their *Temples* into *Theatres*, where the secrets of their Religion may be delivered in *Scenes*, and to make their *Players Priests*, and that the common rout might sing the *amours*, the sports and pastimes, the wantonnesses and impieties of their gods, no places being so fit for such a Religion as they. Besides the attributing to them humane bodies, with many blemishes and imperfections, and subjection to the miseries of humane life, and to the laws of mortality, they could not deny them

to

to have been guilty of the most horrid *Part I.*  
 and prodigious villanies and enormities, revenge and murder, incest and luxury, drunkenness and intemperance, theft and unnatural rebellion against their Parents, and such like, of which their own Writings were full almost in every page, which served only to corrupt and debauch the minds and manners of youth, as *Octavius* tells his adversary, where he pursues this argument at large, with great eloquence and reason. Nay, those among them that were most in-  
*Min. Fel. p. 19. vid. Arnob. adv. gent. l. 1. p. 7.*  
*quisitive and serious*, and that entertained more abstract and refin'd apprehensions of things than the common people, yet could not agree in any fit and rational notion of a Deity, some  
*Vid. Min. Fel. p. 15. 16.*  
 ridiculously affirming one thing and some another, till they were divided into a hundred different opinions, and all of them farther distant from the *truth*, than they were from one another; the vulgar in the mean while making gods of the most brutish objects, such as Dogs, Cats, Wolves, Goats, Hawks, Dragons, Beetles, Crocodiles, &c. this *Origen* against *Celsus* particularly charges upon the *Egyptians*, *When you approach* (says *he*) *their sacred places, they have glorious*  
*Ado. Coss. l. 3 p. 121.*  
*Groves*

Part I. Groves and Chappels, Temples with goodly Gates, and stately Portico's, and many mysterious and religious Ceremonies; but when once you are entred, and got within their Temples, you shall see nothing but a Cat or an Ape, or a Crocodile, or a Goat, or a Dog worshipp'd with the most solemn veneration. Nay they deified senseless and inanimate things, that had no life or power to help themselves, much less their Worshippers, Herbs, Roots, and Plants; nay unmanly and degenerate passions, fear, paleness, &c. fell down before stumps and statues, which owed all their Divinity to the cost and folly of their Votaries; despised and trampled on by the sorriest Creatures, Mice, Swallows, &c. who were wont to build nests in the very mouth of their gods, and Spiders to periwig their heads with Cobwebs: being forc'd first to make them, and then make them clean, and to defend and protect them, that they might fear and worship them, as he in *Minutius* wittily derides them; in whose Worship there are (says he) many things that justly deserve to be laugh'd at, and others that call for pity and compassion. And what wonder now, if the Christians were not in the least ashamed to be called *Atheists*, with respect to such

*Vid. Athanasius. orat. contr. gent.*

*Min. Fel. p. 20.*

such Deities, and such a Religion as this Part I. was?

Thirdly, In the strict and proper notion of *Atheism*, they no less truly than confidently denied the charge, and appealed to their severest adversaries, whether those who owned such principles as they did, could reasonably be stiled *Atheists*; none ever pleaded better and more irrefragable arguments for the existence of a supream infinite Being, who made and governs all things by infinite wisdom and almighty power, none ever more ready to produce a most clear and candid confession of their faith, as to this grand article of Religion, than they: Although we profess our selves *Atheists*, with respect to those whom you esteem and repute to be gods (so their Apologist *J. Martyr* tells the Senate) yet not in respect of the true God, the parent and fountain of wisdom and righteousness, and all other excellencies and perfections, who is infinitely free from the least contagion or spot of evil: Him, and his only begotten Son (who instructed us and the whole Society of good Angels in these divine mysteries) and the Spirit of Prophecy, we worship and adore, honouring them in truth, and with the highest reason, and ready

*J. Martyr. Ap. 1. p. 36.*



Part I. ready to communicate these things to any one that's willing to learn them, as we our selves have received them. Can we then be *Atheists*, who worship the great *Creator* of this world, not with blood, incense, and offerings (which we are sufficiently taught he stands no need of,) but exalt him according to our power with prayers and praises, in all the addresses we make to him: believing this to be the only honour that's worthy of him, not to consume the Creatures which he has given us for our use, and the comfort of those that want, in the fire by Sacrifice; but to approve our selves thankful to him, and to sing and celebrate rational hymns and sacrifices, pouring out our prayers to him as a grateful return for those many good things which we have received, and do yet expect from him, according to the faith and trust that we have in him. To the same purpose *Athenagoras*, in his return to this charge; *Diagoras* indeed was guilty of the deepest atheism and impiety; but we who separate God from all material being, and affirm him to be eternal and unbegotten, but all matter to be made and corruptible, how unjustly are we branded with impiety?

*Athen. leg.  
pro Chri-  
stian. p. 5.*

It's

It's true, did we side with *Diagoras* in Part I, denying a Divinity, when there are so many and such powerful arguments from the creation and government of the world, to convince us of the existence of God and Religion, then both the guilt and punishment of *Atheism* might deservedly be put upon us. But when our Religion acknowledges one God, the maker of the Universe, who being uncreate himself, created all things by his word, we are manifestly wrong'd both in word and deed; both in being charged with it, and in being punished for it. We are accused (*says Arnobius*) for introducing *Lib. I. p. 71* prophane Rites and an impious Religion; but tell me, O ye men of reason, how dare you make so rash a charge? To adore the mighty God, the Sovereign of the whole Creation, the Governour of the highest powers, to pray to him with the most obsequious reverence; under an afflicted state to lay hold of him with all our powers, to love him, and look up to him, is this a dismal and detestable Religion, a Religion full of sacrilege and impiety, destroying and defiling all ancient Rites? is this that bold and prodigious crime, for which your Gods are so angry with us? and

Part 1. and for which you your selves do so rage against us, confiscating our Estates, banishing our persons, burning, tearing, and racking us to death with such exquisite tortures? *We Christians* are nothing else but the worshippers of the supream King and Governour of the world, according as we are taught by *Christ our Master*: search, and you'll find nothing else in our Religion: this is the *sum* of the whole affair; this the end and design of our divine Offices; before him it is that we are wont to prostrate and bow our selves, him we worship with common and conjoin'd devotions, from him we beg those things which are just and honest, and such as are not unworthy of him to hear and grant. So little reason had the Enemies of *Christianity*, to brand it with the note of *Atheism* and *Irreligion*.

## CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

Of the Novelty that was charged upon Christianity.

*Christianity excepted and cried out against as a late novel Doctrine. This a common charge: continued, when Christianity had been some hundreds of years in the world. Christianity greatly prejudiced by this charge. Men loth to forsake the Religion of their Ancestors. What the Christians answered to it. Christian Religion the same in substance and effect with that of the ancient Jews: in that respect by far the oldest Religion in the World; prov'd and urg'd by Tertullian, Cl. Alexander, Eusebius, &c. Its lateness and novelty no real prejudice to rational and unbiass'd men. The folly and vanity of adhering to absurd and unreasonable Customs and Principles, because ancient, and of refusing to change opinions for the better. An objection, if Christ and Christianity were so great blessings to mankind, why was it so long before God revealed them; answered out of Arnobius.*

C

This

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C

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## Part I.

**T**His *Artifice* proving weak and ineffectual, the next charge was its *lateness and nobility*, that it was an upstart Sect, and but of yesterdays standing, not known in the world many years before, whereas the Religion of the *Gentiles* had uncontrollably and almost universally obtained from Ages and Generations; a Doctrine newly sprung up, and come as 'twere from a far Country, *περσάτε ἰδεύοντες ὃ καὶ ἡμεῖς λόγου*, as 'tis in *Theophilus Antiochenus*: a divorce, or rending themselves from the institutions of their Ancestors, as *Tertullian* has it. This charge begun betimes, when *S. Paul* preached at *Athens*, we find this the first thing charged upon him, *that he was a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection*; and it was followed with a loud cry in succeeding times: you are wont to object to us (says *Arnobius*) that our Religion is *novel*, start up not many days ago, and that you ought not to desert your ancient way, and the Religion of your Country, to espouse *barbarous* and foreign Rites. And *Eusebius* tells us, the Heathens were wont to reason thus: what *strange* profession of Religion is this?

Lib. 3. p.  
119: B.

Ad Nation.  
lib. 1. c. 10.  
p. 46.

Ath. 17. 18.

Lib. 2 p. 40

Præpar. E.  
vang. lib.  
1. c. 2. p. 5.

this? what *new* way of life? wherein we can neither discern the Rites amongst us us'd in *Greece*, nor amongst any Sect of the *Barbarians*; who can deny them to be *impious*, who have forsaken the Customs of their Fathers, observed before in all Cities and Countries, revolting from a way of Worship, which had been universally received from all Ages both by *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, entertained both in Cities and Villages, countenanced and approved by the common vote and consent of all *Kings*, *Law-makers*, *Philosophers*, and the greatest persons whatsoever. Nay we may observe, that after *Christianity* had been settled for some hundreds of years in the world, and was become the prevailing Religion, and had in a manner banished all others out of doors, and driven them into corners, yet this charge still continued; thus *Julian* the Emperour writing to the people of *Alexandria*, concerning the *Galileans* (so he was wont in scorn to call the *Christians*) that he wondered that any of them durst dwell amongst them, or that they would suffer these despisers of the Religion of their Country to be in any place amongst them, calls *Christianity* the *new Doctrine* that

Ep. 51.  
oper. Jul.  
part. 2.  
p. 208.

Part I. that had been preached to the world: the very same title which *Lucian* had also long since bestowed upon it, where speaking of our *Saviour*, he calls him the great man that was crucified in *Palestine*, who introduced that *new Religion* into the world. So *Symmachus* some years after *Julian* (a man no less eminent for his parts and eloquence, than for his power and authority, being *Chief Priest* and *Prefect of Rome*) confidently owns to the *Emperours* themselves (though they were *Christians*) that he did endeavour to defend the institutions of their Ancestors, the settled Rights and Laws of the Country (he means them of Religion) that he design'd to settle that state of Religion, which for so many Ages had been profitable to the Commonwealth; and therefore begs of them, that what they had received when they were Children, now they were old they might leave to their Posterity; that they were to be true to the trust that had from so many Ages been devolved upon them, and were to follow their Parents, as they had happily done their Ancestors that had gone before them. So he; pleading the cause of *Paganism* from its antiquity [and prescription, obliquely reflecting

Part I. reflecting upon the *novellism* of *Christianity*, for more he durst not speak, the *Emperours* (to whom he made his address) being themselves *Christians*. This indeed must needs be a mighty *prejudice* against the *Christian Religion*, at its first coming into the world, for all men as they have a natural reverence for Religion, so they have a great veneration for Antiquity, the Customs and Traditions of their Fathers, which they entertain as a most inestimable *deposited*, and for which they look upon themselves as obliged to contend, as for that which is most solemn and sacred. What more excellent and venerable (*says the Heathen in Minucius Felix*) than to entertain the discipline of our Forefathers, to solemnize that Religion that has been delivered to us, to worship those Gods, the knowledge of whom has been insus'd into us by our Parents, not boldly to determine concerning the Deities, but to believe those who have been before us. To the same purpose *Lactantius* speaking of the Heathens, they go on (*says he*) most pertinaciously, to maintain and defend the Religion derived down to them from their Ancestors, not so much con-

Part I. sidering what they are, as concluding them to be right and good, because the Ancients conveyed them to them; nay, so great the power and authority of antiquity, that it's accounted a kind of impiety to question it, or enquire into it. Upon these accounts the *Gentiles* bore so hard upon *Christianity*, beholding it as a *Musbroom-Seed*, sprung up of a sudden, and as an incroaching Inmate, undermining the established Religions of the world.

Now we find two pleas especially, which the *Christians* made to this Indictment.

First, That the charge was not wholly and universally true, for besides that many principles of *Christianity* were the same with those of the *Law of Nature*, the *Christian Religion* was for substance the same with that of the ancient *Jews*; whose Religion claim'd the precedency of all others in the word. That the Religion was in substance and effect the same, is expressly asserted and proved by *Eusebius*; the ancient *Patriarchs* were the *Christians* of the old world, who had the same Faith, Religion, and Worship common with us, nay the same name too, as he endeavours to prove, from

Prepar. E.  
vang. l. 1.  
c. 5. p. 9.  
&c.

from that, *touch not mine anointed*, Part I, τὸν Χριστὸν μὴ, my *Christs* or *Christians*: and how far superiour in age they were to any thing that's recorded of the most ancient *Gentiles*, to their oldest Writers, *Orpheus*, *Homer*, *Hesiod*, nay to *Vid. Athen. leg. pro Christianis.* their very gods themselves, is sufficiently made good by many of the ancient Fa- p. 16. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. thers; there being at the easiest computation between *Moses* and *Homer*, above 600 years; nay *Cadmus* the first inventor of Letters among the *Græcians* was some Ages junior unto *Moses*. Therefore *Origen* tells *Celsus*, that *Moses* and the Prophets were not only more ancient than *Plato*, but than *Homer* himself, yea than the very invention of Letters amongst the *Græcians* who yet were as proud of their antiquity, as any other Nation in the World. Nay whatever useful and excellent notions the great *Pi. ap. ap. Ev. lib. 10. tot. Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 1. p. 320.* Masters of Religion amongst the *Heathens* had amongst them, 'tis plain they borrowed, or more truly stole them from the Writings of the Ancients, *Jews*, as is abundantly demonstrated by *Eusebius* at large; as before him it had been done by *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, and by *Tertullian* before them both, who shews that all their Poets and Philosophers had

Adv. Cels. l. 6. p. 279.

Pi. ap. ap. Ev. lib. 10. tot. Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 1. p. 320. Tert. Ap. c. 47. vid. Theod. de curand. Grec Aff. sect. Sermon. 2. de Priacip.

Part 1. drunk deep of the *Fountain* of the Prophets, and had forced their best Doctrines and Opinions from thence, though subtilly altering and disguising them, to make them look more like their own: so that upon this consideration, the accusation was unjust and false, and *Christianity* appears the oldest Religion in the world.

Secondly, Admit the *Christian* Religion, in a more limited and restrained sense, to be of a far *later* standing than the Religion of the *Gentiles*, yet they pleaded, that 'twas infinitely reasonable, that they should change for the better, whenever it offered it self to them; that *novel truth* was better than *ancient error*, and that they ought not to be eternally bound up in old inveterate Customs and Principles, when those which were abundantly more reasonable and satisfactory were presented to them. You tell us (*says Clemens Alex.*) that you may not subvert the Customs received from your Ancestors: but if so, why then are we not content without any other *food* than our *Mothers milk*, to which we were accustomed, when we first came into the world: why do we *encrease* or *impair* our estates; and not rather

Admonit.  
ad gent.  
p. 57.

rather keep them at the same pitch, just Part 1. as we received them from our Fathers: why have we left off those toys and sports, to which we were wonted while Infants and Children, but only because years and discretion (although we had no other Tutor) would make us quit those childish and trifling vanities. That old age (*says S. Ambrose*) has true cause to blush, that is asham'd to reform; 'tis not *multitude* of years, but the *goodness* of *manners* that makes gray hairs worthy of praise and honour; no age is too late to learn, nor is it shame to grow better. What wilt thou do (*says Lactantius to the Heathen*) wilt thou follow Reason or thy Ancestors? If Reason, then thou must needs relinquish the authority and institutions of thy Forefathers, because that way only can be right, that is warranted and prescribed by Reason: but if piety towards thine Ancestors sway with thee to follow them, thou must confess, both that they were Fools in devoting themselves to a Religion contrary to Reason, and that thou thy self art unwise and simple, in worshipping what thou art convinced to be false: besides, that they had little reason to boast of those goodly Ancestors, to whom they adhered

Ambros. Ep.  
2. contr.  
Symmach.  
inter Ep.  
Symmach.  
p. 562.

Lactant.  
loco supra  
laudato.

**Part I.** adhered so close, and upon whose authority they did so much depend, as he goes on to demonstrate in the remaining part of that Chapter. That you object to us the novelty of our Religion (*so Arnobius*) may we not charge some such fault upon the first and most ancient Ages of the world, who at first liv'd in a very poor and mean state; but by little and little chang'd it into a more liberal and splendid course of life? was it any crime that they changed their *beasts skins* into more *comely and convenient Garments*, or that they were no longer fond of their *thatcht Cottages*, or chose to dwell like wild beasts in Rocks and Caverns, when they had learnt to build *better habitations*? 'tis natural to all mankind to prefer better before what is worse, profitable before what is useless, and to seek after what we are assur'd is more grateful and excellent: therefore when you charge us with Apostasie from the Religion of the Ancients, you should rather consider the *cause* than the *action*, and not so much upbraid us with what we have *left*, as examine what it is we have *entertain'd*. For if meerly to change our opinion, and to pass from ancient Institutions to what's more late

*Adv. gent.*  
*l. 2. p. 40.*  
*41.*

late and new, be a fault and crime; **Part I.** then none so guilty of the charge as your selves, who have so oft changed your manners and course of life, and by embracing new Rites and Customs, have condemned those that went before: which he there makes good by particular instances: and the same answer St. *Ambrose* gives to *Symmachus*, if nothing but ancient Rites will please you, how comes it to pass, that there has been a succession of new and foreign Rites even in *Rome* it self; of which he gives him many particular examples: In short, *Arnobius* wittily argues thus, *Our way* *Id. p. 42.* *of Religion* (you say) *is new, and yours ancient: and what does this either hurt our cause, or help yours? If ours be new, 'twill in time become old; is yours old, there was a time when it was new: the goodness and authority of Religion is not to be valued by length of time, but by the excellency of its worship, nor does it become us to consider so much when it begun, as what it is we Worship.*

It may not be impertinent in this place to take notice of what the Heathens objected as a branch of this charge: that if God's sending *Christ* into the world, was so great a blessing, why did this Sa-

*Id. ib. p. 43.*  
*vid. Greg.*  
*Niss Orat.*  
*Catechet.*  
*c. 29. tom.*  
*2. p. 521.*

*viour*



Part I. *viour* of mankind come no *sooner*, to reveal this Religion, to lead men into the truth, to tell the world who this true God was, and to reduce us to the adoration of him; if so, why did God suffer him to stay so long, and to be born (as 'twere) but a few hours before, in comparison of the preceding Ages of the world? To this *Arnobius* answers, with a great deal of *modesty* and *reason*, that he could not tell; that 'twere easie to retort the same captious question upon them; if 'twere so much to the benefit of the world, that *Hercules*, *Æsculapius*, *Mercury*, &c. should be gods, why were they born and deified no *sooner*, that not only posterity but antiquity might have reap'd advantage by them? If there was reason in one case, then there was also in the other; but to assign proper and particular reasons was not possible; it not being within the power of such a short-sighted Creature as man is, to fathom the depth of the Divine Councils, or to discover by what ways or methods he disposes his affairs; these things being known only to him who is the grand Parent, the Sovereign Lord and Governour of all things: that although we are not able to assign the cause why a thing

thing comes to pass in this or that particular manner, yet this concludes never a whit the more, that the thing is not so, or that it is less credible, when it has otherwise the most clear and unquestionable evidence and demonstration. More particularly he answers, that our *Saviour* cannot be said to have been lately sent in respect of God, because in respect of eternity there is nothing late; where there is neither *beginning* nor *end*, there can be nothing *too soon*, nothing *too late*: Time indeed is transacted by parts and terms, but these have no place in a perpetual and uninterrupted series of eternal Ages: what if that *state* of things, to which he came to bring relief, required that *season* of time to come in? what if the condition of ancient and modern times were in this case not alike? or call'd for somewhat different methods of cure? it may be the great God then chose to send *Christ*, when the state of mankind was more *broken* and *shatter'd*, and humane nature become more weak and unable to help it self: this we are sure of, that if what so lately came to pass had been necessary to have been done some thousands of years ago, the supream Creator would have

Part I. have done it, or had it been necessary to have been done thousands of years hence; nothing could have forc'd God to have anticipated the settled periods of time one moment; for all his actions are managed by fix'd and eternal reasons, and what he has once determined, cannot be frustrated by any change or alteration. And thus we see how easily, and yet how satisfactorily, the *primitive Christians* wip'd off that double imputation of *impiety* and *novelty*, which the Gentiles had so undeservedly cast upon their Religion.

### CHAP. III.

Things charged upon the Christians, respecting their outward condition.

*The Christians look'd upon and despis'd by the Heathens, as a company of rude and illiterate persons, mechanicks, silly women and children. This Charge considered and largely answered by Origen. Christianity provides for the truest and best knowledge: it excludes none learned*

or

or unlearned. Christians not shy of Part II. communicating the knowledge of their mysteries to men sober and inquisitive. The efficacy of Christianity in prevailing upon men of the acutest parts and greatest learning. The Christians accused for being poor and mean. This charge (universally) false. Christianity entertain'd by persons of all sorts, of the highest as well as the lowest rank. Several instances of such: Fl. Clemens and Fl. Domitilla (Domitian's near kindred) Christians; another Domitilla Domitian's Niece, Acil. Glabrio the Consul, Apollonius the Senator, and others. Philip the Emperour proved to be no Christian: the rise of the story whence. Though Christianity had had no such persons under its profession, this had been no just reasonable prejudice. External pomp and grandeur not necessary to Religion. The advantages Christians reaped from their meanness and contempt of the world. Of their being charged as a people useless and unserviceable to the publick. This disowned. The opinion that it was not lawful for Christians to bear Arms, or Offices, particular only to some persons and in some cases, and why. How much the world was

was beholden to Christians, for reclaiming men from vice and wickedness. The Gospel greatly instrumental that way; its general influence upon those whom it did not convert: the Writings of Philosophers generally better after Christianity appeared, and why. The excellent Prayer of Simplicius. Christians very useful by frequent working beneficial miracles, curing diseases, raising the dead, dispossessing Devils, &c. This miraculous power continued for several Ages in the Church. Christians further traduced as pernicious to the world, as the cause of all publick evils and calamities. This objected at every turn. The occasion of S. Augustine's and Orosius his writing a vindication of it. This Charge justly retorted upon the Heathens, and they sent to seek the cause of publick calamities nearer home. Some few hinted by Tertullian. Christians unjustly charged with it, because the world was pestered with such evils before Christianity appeared in it. The publick State better and more prosperous, since Christianity than before. Its prosperity ebb'd or increas'd, according to the entertainment Christianity found in the world.

THE

THE second sort of arts which the Enemies of Christianity made use of, to render Christians vile and despicable, related to the circumstances of their external state and condition in the world, where two things were laid to their charge, that they generally were a very mean and inconsiderable sort of men, and that they were an useless and unscrviceable people, nay pernicious and mischievous to the world. They were looked upon as the lowest and meanest rank of men, persons neither considerable for their parts and learning, nor for their estates and quality. Inconsiderable they were accounted in respect of parts and learning; you scorn and spit us out as rude <sup>Adv. gent. 1. 3 p. 49.</sup> and simple, and think that the treasury of all divine and excellent knowledge is open only to your selves, as Arnobius tells them. Thus Celsus objected, that amongst the Christians no wise and learned men were admitted to the mysteries of their Religion; let no man come that is learned, wise, and prudent (for these things, says he, they account evil and unlawful) but if any be unlearned, an infant or an ideot, let him come and welcome; openly declaring, that none but Fools, and such

<sup>Orig. contr. Cels. 1. 3. p. 137.</sup>

D

Part 1. such as are devoid of sense and reason, Slaves, silly Women, and little Children are fit Disciples for the God they worship. We may observe (*says he*)

*ib. p. 141.* these trifling and *Mountebank Impostors*, bragging great things to the vulgar, not in the presence and company of wise men (for that they dare not) but wherever they espye a flock of Boys, Slaves, and weak simple people, there they presently crowd in, and boast them-

*Pag. 144.* selves; you shall see (*as he goes on in this charge*) Weavers, Taylors, Fullers, and the most rustick and illiterate Fellows, at home when before their elders and betters as mute as Fishes; but when they can get a few Children and silly Women by themselves, then who so wise and learned, who so full of talk, and so able to teach and instruct as they? Much to the same purpose *Cecilius* dis-

*Min. Fal.*  
*P. 7.*

courses in *Minucius Felix*, that the *Christians* were men of a desperate and unlawful faction, who gathering a company out of the very dregs and refuse of the people, of silly, easie, credulous Women, who by reason of the weakness of their Sex are easily imposed and wrought upon, combine them into a wicked confederation, a people mute in publick,

*publick*, but in corners talkative and full of prattle. Now to this part of the accusation *Origen* answers, that 'tis for the main false, and proceeds from the spirit of malice and reproach: the sum of his answer as he delivers it to the several parts of the Charge, take thus: That the *Christian Doctrine* invites and calls men to wisdom, as appears both from the Writings of the *Jews* of old; and the Scriptures of the *New Testament*, where-

in we find many singularly eminent for wisdom and learning, *Moses*, *Solomon*, *Daniel*, and such like of old; and the blessed *Jesus* made choice of such Disciples as whom he judged fittest to communicate the secrets of his Religion to, and privately opened and explained to them, what he only delivered in parables and similitudes unto others; that he promised to send forth Prophets, wise men, and Scribes, for the divulging and propagating of his Doctrine; that *S. Paul* reckons wisdom and knowledge in the first rank of the gifts of God, and that if he any where seem to reflect severely upon wisdom or humane learning (which probably may be the first rise of this Charge) he only censures the abuse, never intending to blame the

*Pag. 137.*  
*& seq.*

*Matth. 23.*  
*34.*

*1 Cor.*  
*12. 8.*

Part 1. thing is self; that when he prescribes the properties of a *true Bishop*, or Governour of the Church, he requires this as one necessary qualification, *that he be apt to teach, and able by*  
 Tit. 1. 9. *sound Doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers*: that we are so far from prohibiting any, that come who will, wise, learned, and prudent, provided the rude, simple, and unlearned be not excluded, for to them also the Gospel does promise and provide a remedy, making them meet for God; that, no man but must confess that 'tis an excellent thing to study the best arts and discipline, and that learning, the study of Arts, and prudence are so far from being an hinderance to the knowledge of God, that they mightily help it and advance it: that, it's a great calumny to compare us to *wandering impostors*, who by our reading and expounding the Divine Oracles, do only exhort the people to *piety* toward the great God, and to the rest of those *virtues* which are its individual companions; endeavouring to rescue men from a contempt of the Deity, and all brutish and irregular passions; a thing which the very best Philosophers of them

them all could wish for: that *Christians* Part 1. are so far from admitting any, hand over head, that they first pre-examine the minds of those that desire to become their auditors; and having privately had tryal of them, before they receive them into the Congregation, when they perceive them fully resolved to lead a pious and religious life, then they admit them in their distinct orders, some that are newly admitted, but not *yet baptized*, others that have given some evidence and demonstration of their purpose to live as becomes Christians; amongst whom there are *Governours* appointed to inspect and enquire into the life and manners of those who have been admitted, that they may expel and turn off those *candidates* of Religion who answer not their profession; and heartily entertain those that do, and by dayly converses build them up and make them better: that, it's false to say that we apply our selves only to *Women* and *Children*, and that in *corners*, when we endeavour what we can by all means to fill our Societies with wise and prudent persons, and to such we open the more *sublime* and *recondite principles* of Religion, otherwise accommodating our discourses

Part I. to the capacities of meaner persons, who stand more in need of *milk* than *strong meat*: that, we desire that all men may be trained up in the Word of God, and that Servants and Children may have such instructions given them, as are futable and convenient no them, the Ministers of our Religion professing themselves to be debtors both to the *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, both to the *wise* and to the *unwise*, that as much as may be they may outgrow their ignorance, and attain to the best kind of wisdom: and whereas we are accused to seduce and circumvent *silly Women* and *little Children*, and to draw them away from more weighty and serious counsels; let him produce any such, and enquire of them whether ever they heard better *Masters* than ours, or if they did, why they would leave so grave a discipline, and suffer themselves to be seduced into a worse. but he'll find no such thing to fasten upon us; but that on the contrary we reclaim *Women* from immodesty, from falling out with their Husbands, and parting from them, from the wild extravagancies of the sports and Theaters, and from all superstition whatsoever: the youth who are prone to  
vice

vice and luxury, we restrain, by telling Part I. them not only how base and degenerate a thing it is to indulge their lust, but into how much danger they precipitate their souls, and what punishments the divine vengeance lays up for such profligate offenders: we openly, not in corners, promise eternal happiness to those who live according to the rules of the divine Law, who set God always before their eyes, and whatever they do, endeavour to approve themselves to him: and is this the *discipline*, these the *doctrines* of Weavers, Taylors, Fullers, and the most rustick and illiterate persons? surely no: if at any time, we refuse to produce our instructions and counsels before *Masters of Families*, or the *Doctors of Philosophy*: know, that if they be studious of *virtue*, enemies to vice, and such as breath after the best things, before such we are most willing and ready to instruct our youth, being well assur'd we shall find them favourable Judges: but if they be enemies to goodness and virtue, and opposers of sound wholsom Doctrine, then if we hold our peace, no fault can justly be laid upon us: for in such circumstances the Philosophers themselves would not dis-

Part 1. cover the dictates and mysteries of their Philosophy. This is the *substance* of the several answers, which *Origen* pursues more at large through several pages: which though very rational and satisfactory, yet we find something pleaded more direct and positive to the charge; viz. that although amongst the *Christians* (as 'tis in any Society of men) the vulgar and more common sort, might not be men of the sharpest understanding, or vers'd in the more polite arts of learning, yet wanted they not (and those no small number) great *Scholars*, men of acute parts and raised abilities, such as had run through the whole *circle* of the *Sciences*, who daily came over to them: So *Arnobius*, urging the triumphant power and efficacy which the Christian Faith had over the minds of men, who (*says he*) would not believe it, when he sees in how short a time it has conquered so great a part of the world; when men of so great wit and parts, *Orators*, *Grammarians*, *Rhetoricians*, *Lawyers*, *Physicians*, and *Philosophers*, have thrown up those former sentiments; of which but a little before they were so tenacious, and have embraced the Doctrines of the Gospel, So

Adv. gent.  
l. 2. p. 21.

fast did the *Christian Church* fill with the Part 1. most eminent professors of all parts of Learning, that were then known to the world.

Nor were the *Christians* of those times more despised upon the account of their *weakness* and *ignorance*, than they were for their *meanness* and *poverty*; they were looked upon as *de ultima face*, as the *scum* and *refuse* of the people, scarce a considerable man to be found amongst them. See (*says the Heathen in Minu- Pag. 9.*  
*cins Felix*) the most and best of all your party are a *poor*, *beggerly*, *hungerstarv'd* generation, that have neither riches, nor reputation to bear them out. This Charge (however impertinent, seeing the *goodness* of any Religion depends not upon the *greatness* of its professors) was yet as *untrue* as 'twas *unreasonable*, the *Christians* having amongst them persons of the chiefest place and quality, and after some years the Princes and Potentates of the world, and even the *Emperors* themselves struck sail to the *Scepter* of *Christ*. When *Scapula* the *President* of *Carthage* threatned the *Christians* with severe and cruel usage, *Tertullian* bids him bethink himself; what wilt thou do (*says he*) with so many  
thousands

Ad Scap.  
c. 4. p. 71.

Part 1. thousands of men and women of every sex, age, and dignity, as will freely offer themselves? What *fires*, what *swords* wilt thou stand in need of? What is *Carthage* it self like to suffer, if *decimated* by thee; when every one shall find there his near Kindred and Neighbours, and shall see there Matrons, and men perhaps of *thy own* rank and order, and the most principal persons, and either the Kindred or Friends of those who are thy own nearest friends. Spare them therefore for *your own* sake, if not for *ours*. And if there were persons of such quality in *Afric* (so remote, and in a manner so barbarous a Province) what may we suppose there were in *Rome* it self, and other parts of the *Roman Empire*. And in his *Apologie*, speaking of the vast spreading of the party, though (*says he*) we be men of quite another way, yet have we fill'd all places among you, your *Cities*, *Islands*, *Castles*, *Corporations*, *Councils*, nay your *Armies* themselves, your *Tribes*, *Companies*, yea the *Palace*, the *Senate*, and the *Courts of Justice*; only your *Temples* we have left you free. Sure I am *Pliny* in his Letter to the *Emperor*, tells him, that *Christianity* had not only over-run City and Country,

Cap. 37.  
p. 30.

Lib. 10.  
Epist. 97.

Country, but that it had infected many of Part 1. every sex, age, and order of men.

And indeed it were no hard matter out of the ancient *Histories* and *Martyrologies* of the Church, nay from the *Heathen* Writers themselves, to prove that persons of the highest rank and quality, even in those times, embraced *Christianity*, and seal'd it with their blood. Of which, it may suffice to give an account only of some few. Not to insist upon the *Saints* which *S. Paul* tells us were in *Nero's Palace*, we find many considerable persons, and some of them near a kin to the *Emperour* under the reign of *Domitian* (that cruel Prince and persecutor of *Christians*) entertaining the profession of the *Gospel*. And first let us hear the account which *Dion Cassius* the famous Historian gives us. He tells us that about the latter end of *Domitian's* Reign he condemned many (some whereof were *slain*, others stript of their *estates*) and amongst the rest *Flavins Clemens* the *Consul*, his own Cousin-german, and his Wife *Flavia Domitilla*, near *akin* also to the *Emperour*, upon pretence of *Atheism* (ἐπιτιμήθη ἄθεότητι) and for that they had embrac'd the Rites and Religion of the *Jews*.

Lib. 67. in  
Domit.  
p. 766.



Part 1. *Jews*. His Nephew *Clemens* he put to death, his Wife *Domitilla* he banished into the Island *Pandateria*. Upon the same account also he put to death *Acilius Glabrio*, who, together with *Trajan* had been *Consul* the year before. That the persons here describ'd were *Christians*, is plain, partly from the Charge of *Atheism* here fastned upon them (the common and familiar accusation, and the title given to *Christianity* by the Heathens, as we observ'd before) and partly because they are said to have passed over to the Rites and Customs of the *Jews*; nothing being more ordinary in the Historians of those times, than to mistake *Christians* for *Jews*, and to call them so, because both proceeding out of the same Country; *Christ* himself and his *Apostles* being *Jews* born, and his Religion first published and planted there. And that which may give some more countenance to this, is, that *Suetonius* speaking of *Domitian's* condemning this *Fl. Clemens*, represents him as a man *contentissima inertie*, as a most contemptibly dull and sluggish person, which we know was generally charged upon the *Christians*, that they were an *useless* and *unactive* people, as we shall have

In Domitian. c. 15.  
p. 808.

have occasion by and by more particularly to remark. Besides this *Fl. Domitilla*, the Wife of *Clemens*, there was another of the same name, his Niece by the Sister's side (unless *Dion Cassius* mistook, and put down *Wife* for *Niece*, which there's no reason to suppose, seeing both may very well consist together) who (as *Eusebius* informs us) was with many more banished by *Domitian* in the fifteenth year of his Reign, into the Island *Pontia*, and there put to death for the profession of *Christianity*; whose persecutions and martyrdoms (*says he*) are recorded by Heathen-writers themselves. Amongst whom; I suppose, he principally intends *Brettius* or *Brutius* the Historian, whom he cites elsewhere, and out of whom he there quotes this very passage, *That under Domitian many of the Christians suffered martyrdom, amongst whom was Fl. Domitilla, Niece by the Sister's side to Fl. Clemens the Consul, who for being a Christian was banished into the Island Pontia*. She is said after a great deal of hard and tedious usage to have been *burnt*, together with the house wherein she was; her memory celebrated in the *Roman Kalendar* upon the seventh of *May*.

Hist. Eccl.  
l. 3. c. 18.  
p. 89.

Can. Chron.  
ad An. Chr.  
97. p. 208.  
& Chron.  
p. 80. Edit.  
Gras.

Martyr.  
Rom. ad  
7. Maii.

Besides

Part I. Besides these, we find that *Christianity* getting ground under the quiet Reign of the Emperour *Commodus*, many of the greatest birth and fortunes in *Rome*, together with their whole Families flock'd over to the *Christian* Faith. Amongst whom was *Apollonius*, a man famous for Philosophy; and all polite humane literature, who so gallantly pleaded his cause before the *Senate*, and was himself a *Senatour*, as *S. Hierom* informs us. I shall but mention one instance more, and that is of *Philip* the Emperour; whom *Eusebius* expressly affirms to have been a *Christian*, and the first of the Emperours that was so; followed herein by a whole troop both of ancient and modern Writers. Nay we are told by some a formal story, that this *Philip* and his *Son* were converted by the preaching of *Pontius* the Martyr, and baptized by *Fabian* Bishop of *Rome*. But notwithstanding the smoothness of the story, and the number of authorities, I must confess it seems to me scarcely probable, that a person of so bad a life, guilty of such enormous villanies, as that Emperour was, should either be, or be thought a *Christian*; or if he was, that the whole world should not presently ring of

*Euseb. l. 4. c. 21. p. 189*

*De Script. Eccles. in Apoll.*

*Li. 6 c. 34. p. 232.*

*AB. Pont. apud. Sur. ad 14. Maii. rom. 3.*

of it. Certain I am, that all Histori-Part II  
ans of that time are wholly silent in the case, nor is there the least intimation of any such thing in any Writer, either *Heathen* or *Christian* before *Eusebius*. Nay *Origen* who wrote his Book in defence of *Christianity* under the Reign of this very Emperour, and about this very time (nay and two Epistles, one to *Philip*, the other to his Wife *Severa*, if we may believe *Eusebius*). yet not only makes no mention of it, when it would have made greatly for his purpose, but tacitely implies there was no such thing. For *Celsus* reproving the boldness and petulancy of the *Christians*, as if they should give out, that if they could but bring over the present Emperours to their Religion, all other men would quickly be brought over: *Origen* point blank denies the Charge, and tells him there's no need of any answer, for that none of the *Christians* ever said so. An answer which surely he would not have given, had the Emperour at that time been a *Christian*; not to insist upon many other intimations which might be produc'd out of that Book against it. Besides, *Entropius* reports, that *Philip* and his *Son* being slain by the Souldiers, were yet  
inter

*Adv. Cels. l. 8. p. 429*

*Hist. Rom. l. 9. non longe ab init.*

Part I. *inter Divos relati, deified*, or advanced into the number of their Gods. An honour which 'tis certain the *Senate* would not have done them, had they either been, or but suspected to have been *Christians*. To all which I may add, that *Eusebius* himself (in whom the first footsteps of this story appear) builds it upon no better a foundation, than a *καλὴν λόγον*, a bare tradition and report. That which seems to have given both birth and colour to the story is this. One *Philippus* an illustrious person under the Emperor *Severus*, was a long time Governor of *Egypt*; he by the means of his Daughter *Eugenia* was converted to *Christianity*, under whose shelter the *Christians* there enjoyed great peace and favour (nay the story adds, though certainly without any ground, that he was created Bishop of *Alexandria*) till the Emperor being acquainted with his being a Christian, presently remov'd him, and by the help of his Successor *Terentius* caus'd him to be secretly murdered and made away. This (if any thing) was the rise of the story; and that which makes it more probable, is, the honour and excellency of that employment, the greatest of all the Offices

in

Maty.  
Eugen. a-  
pud Syr.  
ad 25. De.  
comb. tom.  
6:

in the *Roman Empire*, the command and state little less than *regal*; and therefore the Emperours in their Letter to this *Philip* (wherein they reproach him for ingratitude and apostasy) tell him that in a manner he was made a *King*, when he was chosen *President of Egypt*. Accordingly the title of the Governour of *Egypt* (as appears from the *Historians*, but especially the *Notitia Imperii*) was *Præfectus Augustalis*; and how easie was it to mistake *Philippus Augustus* for *Philippus Augustalis*? But enough of this, as also the falleness of that charge, that the *Christians* were such a sorry inconsiderable people.

But however, let us suppose them to have been as mean and poor, as the malice and cruelty of their adversaries did endeavour to make them, yet this was no real prejudice to their cause, nor any great hurt to them. That the most part of us are accused to be poor (*says Octavius in answer to Cecilius his charge*) 'tis not our dishonour, but our glory; the mind as 'tis dissolv'd by plenty and luxury, so 'tis strengthened and girt close by indigence and frugality; and yet how can that man be poor, who wants not, who is not greedy of what's another mans, who is rich in and towards

E

God?

Part. I. God? that man is rather poor, who when he has a *great deal* desires more: the truth is, no man can be so poor, as he was when he was *born*; the *Birds* live without any patrimony entail'd upon them, and the *Beasts* find pastures every day; and yet these are born for our use, all which we fully enjoy, when we do not *covet* them: much *lighter* and *happier* does he go to Heaven, who is not *burdened* by the way with an *unnecessary* load of riches: and yet did we think *estates* so useful to us, we could beg them of God, who being *Lord* of all, might well afford a little to us; but we had rather *despise* them than *enjoy* them, and rather chuse innocency and patience, desiring more to be *good* than to be *great* and *prodigal*. If we endure outward sufferings and tortures, 'tis not so much *pain* as 'tis a *warfare*; our courage is encreased by infirmities, and calamity is very oft the *discipline* of virtue; the *nerves* both of body and mind without exercise would grow loose and faint; and therefore God is neither *unable* to help us, not yet *negligent* of us, as being the Governour of the world, and the *Father* of his Children; but *tries* and *examines* every ones temper in an adverse

adverse state, as *Gold* is tryed in the Part I. fire. Besides it must needs be a sight very pleasing to God, to behold a *Christian* conflicting with grief and misery, preparing himself to *encounter* threatenings and torments, pressing in upon the very noise of *death*, and the horror of the Executioner, maintaining his liberty against Kings and Princes, and only yielding to God, whose he wholly is, coming off from all the attempts of adversity with victory and triumph. So argues that *excellent person* (and who ever reads him in his *native* language must confess it) with equal strength of *eloquence* and *reason*, where he also briefly touches that *objection* so common amongst the Heathens, that if *Christians* were so dear to God, why then did he suffer them to be oppressed with so many miseries and troubles, and not come in to vindicate and relieve them: an argument fully cleared by *Arnobius*, *Lactantius*, and other ancient *Apologists* for the Christian Faith.

*Arnob. adv. gent. l. 2. prop. fin. Lactant. l. 5. de justit. c. 22.*

But this was not all, they were charged as a very *useless* and *unserviceable* people, that contributed nothing to the happiness of the Common-wealth; nay as *destructive* and *pernicious* to humane society,

Part I. society, and as the procuring cause of all those mischiefs and calamities that beset the world. In answer to the first, their being *useless* as to the common good, hear what *Tertullian* says in the case; How can this be (*says he*) when we live amongst you, have the same *diet, habit, manner, and way of life*? we are no *Brachmans* or *Indian Gymnosophists*, who live in Woods, and banish themselves from all civil life: we are not unmindful of what we owe to our great Creator, and therefore despise none of his Creatures, though careful to use them with *temperance* and sobriety; wherefore we live not in the world without the use of your *Markets, Shambles, Bathes, Taverns, Shops, Stables, your Marts*, and other ways of humane commerce: we go to Sea with you, bear *Arms*, till and improve the ground, use merchandize, we undergo *Trades* amongst you, and expose our *works* to your use; and how then we can seem *unserviceable* to your affairs, with which and by which we live, I see not. Certainly (*says he*) if any have cause truly to complain of our being unprofitable, they are *Bawds, Panders, Pimps, Hectors and Ruffians, sellers of poyson, Magicians,*

South-

Ap. c. 42.  
p. 33.

Th. c. 43.

*Southsayers, Wizards, and Astrologers*: Part I. and to be *unserviceable* to these, is the greatest *serviceableness*. But besides this, they pleaded for themselves, that their Religion was highly *beneficial* to the world, and in its own nature contributed to the peace and happiness of mankind; it cannot be denied but that some of the *Primitive Christians* were shie of engaging in *Wars*, and not very forward to undergo publick places of *authority* and *power*; but (besides that this was only the *opinion* of some *private persons*, and not the common and current practice or determination of the *Church*) it arose partly from some mistaken passages in the *Gospel*, turning *Evangelical Counsels* into *positive precepts*; but principally because such *Offices* and *Employments* were usally clogg'd with such circumstances and conditions, as obliged them to some things repugnant to the Christian Law: otherwise where they could do it without offering violence to their Religion and their Conscience, they shunn'd it not, but frequently bore *Arms*, and discharged such Publick Offices as were committed to them, as cannot be unknown to any that are never so little vers'd in the *History*

Part I. *Story of the first Ages of the Church*: never were there better, more faithful and resolute *souldiers*, more obedient to the Orders of their Commanders, more ready to attempt the most hazardous enterprises, never boggling at any thing which they could do without sin: of which, amongst many others I shall instance only in that of the *Thebean Legion*, who being commanded upon a bloody and unlawful butchery, to destroy and cut off the *Christians* their brethren, meekly returned this answer to the Heathen Emperour *Maximianus*, under whom they served; we offer our *hands* against any Enemy, but count it unlawful to embrue them in the blood of the *innocent*: our Swords know how to strike a *Rebel* or an Enemy, but not to wound those who are *Citizens and guiltless*; we remember that we took up Arms for, not against friends and fellow Citizens: we have always fought for justice and piety, and for the safety of the innocent; these have been hitherto the price of those dangers that we have run upon; we have fought for fidelity, which how shall we be able to keep to *you*, if we do not first keep it to *our God*. So far were the Christians of those times from refusing to engage in the

Martyrol.  
Adonis ad  
X. Kalend.  
O Hob.

the service of their Prince. Nay those Part I:  
of them who were so bound up by their private sentiments, as not to think it lawful, yet reckoned they otherways made *equivalent* compensation: thus when *Celsus* press'd the Christians to undergo publick Offices, and to help the Emperours in their Wars; *Origen* answers, that they did so, though by a *divine* not *humane* help, by praying for their persons, and their prosperity and success; above all men (*says he*) we fight for the Emperour, while we train our selves in exercises of piety, and contend by prayers for him. But besides these there were several other instances which the Christians pleaded to vindicate themselves, from being *unserviceable* to the good of mankind, amongst which I shall at present take notice only of these two.

Adv. Cels.  
l. 8. p. 426,  
427.

First, That they really sought to reclaim men from *vice* and *sin*, to a good and a virtuous life; by which means (besides that they provided for mens highest and nearest *interest*, the interest of their souls, and their eternal happiness in another life) they greatly consulted the peace and welfare of the places where they lived; for vicious and

Part 1. wicked men are the *pests* and *plagues* of humane society, that taint and infect others by their bad examples or persuasions, and entail vengeance upon the places of their residence; whilst good men engage the favour and blessing of heaven, and both by their counsels and examples bring over others to sobriety and virtue, whereby they establish and strengthen the foundations of Government, and the happiness of civil life, and none so eminent for this as the Christians of old; this is the great *triumphant* argument wherewith *Origen* at every turn exalts the honour of *Christianity*; this (*says he*) we find in the multitudes of those that believe, who are delivered from that sink of vices, wherein before they were wont to wallow: enquire into the lives of some of us, compare our former and our present course, and you'll find in what filthiness and impieties they tumbled, before they entertained the *Christian Doctrine*; but since the time that they entered into it, how gentle and moderate, how grave and constant are they become, and some so inflam'd with the love of purity, that they forbear even what lawfully they might enjoy; how largely are the Churches

*Adv. Cels.  
lib. 1. p. 9.*

*B. p. 21.*

*ib. p. 53.*

Churches of God, founded by *Christ*, Part 1. spread over all Nations, consisting of such as are converted from innumerable evil ways to a better mind: And elsewhere vindicating the Doctrine of *Christ*, from the mischievous cavils of his adversary, he tells us how 'twas impossible that could be pestilent and hurtful, which had converted so many from their vices and debaucheries, to a course most agreeable to Nature and Reason, and to a life of temperance and all other virtues: and the same he urges frequently in other places, and what greater kindness and benefit could be done to men? Does *Celsus* call upon us (*says he*) to bear Offices for the good of our Country; let him know that the Country is much more beholden to Christians than to the rest of men, while they teach men piety towards God, the tutelar Guardian of the Country, and shew them the way to that heavenly City that is above, which they that live well may attain to, though here they dwell in the smallest City in the world. Nor do the Christians thus employ themselves, because they shun the publick Offices of the civil life; but only reserve themselves for the more divine and necessary

*Lib. 2. p. 78.*

*Lib. 8.*

*p. 427.*

*ib. p. 428.*

Part I. necessary services of the Church, in order to the good and happiness of men; for this they think very just and reasonable, that they should take care of all men, of them of their own party, that they may every day make them better; of others, that they may draw them to the belief and practice of piety and Religion; that so worshipping God in truth, and doing what they can to instruct others, they may be united to the great God, and to his blessed Son, who is the wisdom, truth, and righteousness, and by whom it is that every one is converted to a pious and religious life.

De curand.  
Grat. affe-  
Rib. Serm.  
9. de Leg.  
p. 128.

*Theodoret* discoursing against the *Gentiles*, of the excellency of the Laws of *Christ*, above any that were given by the best Philosophers or wisest men amongst the Heathens, gives them instances of whole Nations whom Christianity had brought off from the most brutish and savage manners, he tells them of the *Persians* who by the Laws given them by *Zarada* lived in incestuous mixtures with their own *Mothers*, *Sisters*, and *Daughters*, looking upon it as a lawful and warrantable practice; till entertaining *Christianity*, they threw off those abominable Laws, and submitted to that tempe-

temperance and chastity which the Go- Part I.  
spel requires of us. And whereas before they were wont to cast out the bodies of their dead, to be devoured by Beasts and Birds of prey, since they embraced the *Christian Religion*, they abstained from that piece of inhumanity, and decently committed them to the earth; from which they could not be restrained, either by the Laws of their Country, or the bitterness of those torments which they underwent. The *Massagetes* who thought it the most miserable thing in the world to *dye* any other than a violent death, and therefore made a Law that all persons arrived to old age should be offered in Sacrifice and eaten, no sooner submitted to *Christianity*, but abhorred those barbarous and abominable Customs. The *Tibarens*, who used to throw aged persons down the steepest Rocks, left it off upon their embracing of the *Gospel*. Upon the same account the *Hyr cani* and the *Caspians* reformed their manners, who were formerly wont to keep Dogs on purpose to devour the bodies of the dead. Nor did the *Scythians* any longer together with their dead bury those alive who had been their nearest friends and kindred. So great



Part 1. great a change (*says my Author*) did the Laws of *Christ* make in the manners of men, and so easily were the most barbarous Nations perswaded to entertain them, a thing which *Plato*, though the best of all Philosophers, could never effect amongst the *Athenians*, his own Fellow Citizens, who could never induce them to govern the Common-wealth, according to those Laws and Institutions which he had prescribed them.

Nay where the Gospel did not produce this effect to reclaim men from their vices and vanities, and to bring them over to the Religion of the crucified *Saviour*; yet had it this excellent influence upon the world, that it generally taught them better lessons, refin'd their understandings, and filled their minds with more useful and practical notions about Religion than they had before. To which purpose it's mainly observable, that those *Philosophers* who lived in the time of *Christianity*, after the Gospel publicly appeared in the world, wrote in a much more *divine strain*, entertained more honourable and worthy sentiments about God and Religion, and the duties of men in their several capacities, than those of their Sect that went before them,

them. Of which I conceive no account Part 1. can be given so satisfactory as this, that the *genius* and spirit of the Gospel began then to fly abroad, and to breathe in a freer air, and so could not but leave some tincture and savour upon the spirits of men, though its most inveterate Enemies. Besides that many of them did more nearly converse with the Writings of *Christianity*, which they read either out of *curiosity*, or with a *design* to confute and answer them. This doubtless sharpened the edge of their understandings, and furnished them with better notions, more useful precepts and rules of life, than are to be met with in any of the old Philosophers: witness those excellent and uncommon strains of piety that run through the Writings of *Seneca*, *Epicætetus*, *Antoninus*, *Arrian*, *Plutarch*, *Hierocles*, *Plotinus*, and the rest that lived in those first Ages of the Gospel: of which I could give considerable instances, were it necessary to my purpose. I shall only as a *specimen*, set down that *Prayer* wherewith *Simplicius* (Enemy enough to *Christianity*) concludes his Comment upon *Epicætetus*: and thus he makes his address to God.

Μετὰ δὴ  
τὴν ἐπι-  
στολὴν  
ἐπεγρά-  
φεν ὅτι  
γενόμενος  
τῆς Χρισ-  
τιανικῆς θε-  
ολογίας  
πολλὰ τοῖς  
δικαίοις ἀ-  
νέμεξαν  
λόγοις.  
Theod. de  
Cur. Græc.  
Ass. Serm.  
2. de prin-  
cip. p. 33.

## Part 1.

Pag. 331.

Ἰκέλευσθε, Δίαποτα,  
ὁ πατὴρ καὶ ἡμεῖς  
τῷ ἐν ἡμῖν λόγῳ, ὑπο-  
μνησθῆναι μὴν ἡμᾶς τῆς  
ἐκείνων ἐκγενέας ἡς ὑξιδ-  
θημεν, παρὰ σε, συμ-  
περῆσαι δὲ ὡς αὐτοκινή-  
τοις ἡμῖν πρὸς τὰ καθάρ-  
σαι τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος  
καὶ τῶν ἀλόγων παθῶν, καὶ  
πρὸς τὸ ὑπερέχειν καὶ  
ἀρχειν αὐτῶν, καὶ ὡς δε-  
γάνοις κεχρηθῆναι κατὰ  
τὸν περισσόν τὸν ἄνθρωπον.  
Καὶ πρὸς διόρθωσιν ἀκει-  
βῆ τῷ ἐν ἡμῖν λόγῳ καὶ  
ἐκείνων αὐτῶν πρὸς τὰ ὄν-  
τως ὄντα διὰ τοῦ τῆς ἀλη-  
θείας φωτός, καὶ τὸ πεί-  
λον, τὸν σωτήρα ἐκείνων,  
ἀφαιρῶν τελῶς τὴν ἀ-  
χλὺν τῶν ψυχικῶν ἡμῶν  
ὁμιμάτων, "Ὅρα γινώ-  
σκομεν ἔν (κατὰ τὸν ὁ-  
μιον) ἢ μὲν θεόν, ἢ δε-  
κα ἄνδρα.

the truth, accurately to correct our reason,  
and to unite it to those things that have a  
real existence. And in the third place, I  
beseech my Saviour, that he would perfect-  
ly dispel the mist that is before the eyes of  
our

I Beseech thee, O  
Lord, thou that  
art the Father and  
guide of our rational  
powers, grant that we  
may be mindful of  
those noble and gene-  
rous natures with  
which thou hast in-  
vested us; and assist  
us, that as persons en-  
dued with self-mov-  
ing principles, we  
may cleanse our  
selves from all bodi-  
ly and brutish passi-  
ons, that we may  
subdue and govern  
them, and in a due  
and decent manner  
use them only as Or-  
gans and instru-  
ments. Help us  
through the light of

our minds, that according to that of the Part 1.  
Poet, we may rightly understand what be-  
longs either to God or man.

Besides the matter of this Prayer,  
which is very sublime and spiritual, the  
manner of its composition is considerable,  
consisting of three parts, and those ad-  
dressed as it were to three persons, an-  
swerable to those in the blessed Trinity,  
the Lord (or Father) the Saviour (or  
Christ) and the light of truth (which even  
in Scripture is a common Periphrasis of  
the Holy Spirit :) whether he intended  
this, I will not say, sure I am it looks  
very like it. But enough of this.

Secondly, That they ordinarily  
wrought such miracles as were incom-  
parably beneficial to the world, in cu-  
ring diseases, raising the dead, and re-  
scuing possessed persons from the merci-  
less rage and cruelty of the Devil: we  
may observe, that in those primitive  
times there were innumerable multitudes  
of possessed persons, beyond what were  
in the Ages either before or since; the  
Divine Providence doubtless permitting  
it to be so, that by this means there  
might be a fairer occasion of commend-  
ing Christianity to the world; and there  
is

Part 1. is nothing which we more commonly meet with in the Writings of the ancient Fathers, than testimonies concerning their triumphant power over *evil Spirits*: *Justin Martyr* discoursing of the end of *Christ's* coming into the world, for the salvation of men, and the subversion of Devils, tells the *Senate*, that these things are so, you may know by what is done before your eyes; for many that were possessed by Devils, throughout the whole world, and even in *this City* of yours, whom all your *Inchanters, Sorcerers, and Conjurers* were not able to cure, many of us *Christians* adjuring them by the name of *Jesus Christ*, who was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, have perfectly cured, and do still cure, disarming and driving out of men those *Demons* that had seized upon them; and the same he affirms more than once and again in his discourse with *Trypho the Jew*. *Irenæus* arguing against the Hereticks, tells us, that the true Disciples of *Christ* did in his name many strange things for the good of others, according as every one had received his gift, some so signally expelling Devils, that those out of whom they were cast came over to the Faith; others foretelling

*Apol. 1.  
p. 45.*

*Adv. hares.  
lib. 2. c. 57.  
p. 218.*

telling future events: others curing men of the most grievous distempers, by putting their hands upon them, and restoring them to their former health: many that have been raised from the dead, and afterwards lived many years amongst us: and indeed innumerable (*says he*) are the gifts which God has every where bestowed upon his Church, whereby in the name of the crucified *Jesus*, many and great miracles are daily done to the great advantage of the world. *Tertullian* appeals to the Heathens, as a thing commonly known amongst them, that they daily restrained the power of Devils, and cast them out of men; and he tells *Scapula the President*, that he might be satisfied of this from his own *Records*, and those very advocates who had themselves reaped this benefit from *Christians*; as for instance, a certain *Notary*, and the Kinsman and Child of another; besides divers other persons of note and quality (not to speak of the meaner sort) who had been recovered either from Devils or from desperate Diseases: nay *Severus* the Father of *Antoninus* having been cured by being anointed with Oyl by *Proculus* a Christian, he kept him in his Palace till his death; whom *Antoninus*

*Ad Scap.  
c. 2 p 69.*

*Ib. c. 4.  
p. 71.*

Part I. *ninus* knew well, having been himself nursed by a *Christian*: and in his *Apolo- gie* he challenges the Heathens to produce any possessed person before the publick Tribunals, and the evil spirit being commanded by any *Christian* shall then as truly confess himself to be a *Devil*, as at other times he falsely boasts himself to be a *god*. And elsewhere putting the case that the Christians should agree to retire out of the Roman Empire, he asks them what protection they would then have left against the secret and invisible attempts of Devils, who made such havock both of their souls and bodies, whom the Christians so freely expelled and drove out; that it would be a sufficient piece of revenge, that hereby they should leave them open to the uncontrouled possession of those evil spirits. 'Twere endless to produce all the testimonies of this nature, that might be fetch'd from *Origen*, *Minucius Felix*, *Cyprian*, *Arnobius*, *Lactantius*, *Eusebius*, and all the old Apologists for the Christian Religion, (some whereof I have briefly noted in the Margin) who constantly pleaded this as a mighty and uncontroulable argument of the truth and divinity of their Religion, and of their

*Apol. c. 37.*  
p. 30.

*Orig. contr.*

*G. lib. 1.*

p. 5 7. 53.

*l. 3. p. 124.*

*l. 7. p. 334.*

376.

*Cypr. Ep. ad*

*Donat. p. 3.*

*ad Deme-*

*trian. p.*

201. 206.

*Min Fel.*

p. 23.

*Arnob. adv.*

*gent. l. 1.*

p. 13.

*Lactant. de*

*Or. error.*

*l. 2. c. 15.*

p. 210.

*Euseb. de*

*monstrat.*

*Evang. l. 3.*

p. 132.

their great usefulness to mankind; nay Part I. this miraculous power continued in the Church some considerable time after *Constantine* and the world was become *Christian*, as appears from *S. Basil*, *Nazianzen*, and others; and though I do not give heed to all the miracles which are reported by *S. Hierom*, in the lives of *Hilarion*, *Paulus*, and some others; or by *Palladius* in his *Historia Lausiaca*; yet doubtless many of them were very true and real; God withdrawing this extraordinary power, as Christianity gained faster footing in the world, and leaving the Church to those standing methods by which it was to be managed and governed to the end of the world.

And yet notwithstanding the case was thus plain and evident, how much the world was beholden to *Christians*, yet were they looked upon as the pests of humane society, counted and called the common enemies of mankind, as *Tertullian* complains; that, they were the causes of all publick calamities, and that for their sakes it was, that vengeance did so often remarkably haunt the *Roman Empire*. This was the common out-cry; if the *City* be besieged (*says Tertullian*) if any thing happen ill in the *Fields*, in the *Garri- sons*,

*Naz. Or. 1.*

*Apol. p. 34.*

*Aug. de C.*

*D. l. 22. c. 8.*

*p. 1339.*

*Greg. Nyss.*

*Or. in suam*

*ordinat.*

*tom. 1.*

p. 876.

*Athanas. de*

*incarn.*

*verb. p. 35.*

*edit. Lat.*

*Ap. c. 37.*

p. 30.

*Ib. c. 1. p. 2.*

Part I. in the *Islands*, presently they cry out,  
*'tis because of the Christians*: they conspire the ruine of good men, and thirst after the blood of the innocent, patronizing their hatred with this vain pretence, that the *Christians* are the cause of all publick misfortunes and calamities; if *Tiber* overflow the walls, if the *Nile* do not (as 'tis wont) overflow the fields, if the *Heaven* do not keep its accustomed course, if an *Earthquake* happen, if a *Famine*, or a *Plague*, presently the cry is, *away with the Christians to the Lions*. Thus *Demetrian* the *Proconsul* of *Afric* objected to *S. Cyprian*, that they might thank the *Christians*, that wars did oftener arise, that *Plagues* and *Famines* did rage so much, and that immoderate and excessive rains hindred the kindly seasons of the year. The same, *Arnobius* tells us, the *Heathens* were wont to object at every turn, and to conclude it as sure as if it had been dictated by an *Oracle*, that since the *Christians* appeared in the world, the world had been well-nigh undone, mankind has been over-run with infinite kinds of evil; and the very gods themselves had withdrawn that solemn care and providence, wherewith they were wont to super-

*Ibid. c. 40.*  
*p. 32.*

*Cypr. ad*  
*Demetr.*  
*p. 157.*

*Arnob. adv.*  
*gent. lib. 1.*  
*p. 1.*

superintend humane affairs. Nay so hot and common was this Charge amongst the *Pagans*, that when the *Goths* and *Vandals* broke in upon the *Roman Empire*, *S. Augustine* was forced to write those excellent Books *De Civit. Dei*, purposely to stop the mouth of this objection, as upon the same account and at his request *Orosius* wrote his seven Books of History against the *Pagans*. Omitting some of the answers given by the Fathers (as being probably less solid, and not so proper in this case; such as, that 'twas no wonder if miseries happened, and things grew worse in this old age of time, the world daily growing more feeble and decrepit; and that these things had been foretold by God, and therefore must necessarily come to pass; two arguments largely and strongly pleaded by *S. Cyprian*: that those evils were properly resolvable into natural causes; and that every thing is not presently evil, because it crosses our ease and interest as *Arnobius* answers: passing by these) I shall take notice only of two things which the *Christians* pleaded in this case.

First, That the *Gentiles* should do very well to seek the true causes of these things

*Aid. Re-*  
*tractat. l. 2.*  
*c. 43. tom.*  
*1. p. 52.*

*P. Oros.*  
*pref. ad*  
*lib. Hist.*  
*ad D. Aug.*

*Ad Demetrian.*  
*p. 198, 199.*

*Arnob. ut*  
*supra p. 4.*

Part I. things nearer home, and to enquire whether 'twas not for their own sakes, that the Divine Providence was thus offended with them; there being very just reasons to think so. *Tertullian* points them to such causes as these. First, their horrible *affronting* their *natural notions* of God, that *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkned, and they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things, as S. Paul* had told them long before: and that therefore 'twas reasonable to suppose, that God was more angry with them, who instead of him worshipped pieces of *wood* and *Statues*, or at best *Genii* and *Devils*, than with those who sincerely paid their adorations to him alone. Secondly, Passing by God the great Master of all goodness and innocence, and the severe revenger of all impiety, they tumbled themselves in all manner of vice and wickedness; and what wonder if the Divine Justice followed close at their heels. You are angry (*says Cyprian*) that God is angry,

*U. supra.*  
N 199. 200

as

as if in living *ill* you deserved *well*, and Part I. as if all that has happened to you were not *less* and *lighter* than your sins: and thou, *Demetrian*, who art a Judge of *others*, but in this a Judge of thy *self*, inspect the retirements of thy conscience, and behold thy self now, who shalt one day be seen naked by all; and thou wilt find thy self enslav'd and led captive by some sins or other; and why then shouldst thou wonder that the flames of the divine anger should rise higher, when the sins of men do daily administer more fuel to it: an answer which he there prosecutes to very excellent purpose. Thirdly, Their prodigious unthankfulness to God for all the former blessings they had received from him: so far as they were *ingrateful*, they were highly *guilty*, and God could not but punish them; had they sought him, whom in part they could not but know, and been observant of him, they would in this case have found him a much more propitious, than an angry Deity, as *Tertullian* tells them. Upon these and such like accounts, they might well conclude it was, that the vengeance of God did press so hard upon them, and that therefore they had no true reason to

Part 1. lay the fault at any other door but their own.

Secondly, As to the thing it self, as 'twas charged upon them, they point blank denied it to be true, and that for two reasons especially.

First, Because the world had been sadly and frequently *pestered* with such *evils* and *miseries* long before the *Christian Religion* appeared in it: I pray (says *Tertullian*) what miseries did overwhelm all the world, and even *Rome* it self, before the times of *Tiberius*, i. e. before the coming of *Christ*; have we not read of *Hierapolis*, and the Islands of *Delos*, and *Rhodes*, and *Cos* destroyed with many thousands of men? does not *Plato* speak of the greatest part of *Asia* and *Afric* swallowed up by the *Atlantic* Sea? an Earthquake drank up the *Corinthian* Sea, and the force of the *Ocean* rent off *Sicilia* from *Italy*: not to ask where were the *Christians*, the great contemners of your gods? but where were *your gods* themselves, when the Flood over-ran the world? *Palestine* had not yet received the *Jewish Nation* out of *Egypt*, much less had the *Christians* sat down there, when *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* and the adjacent parts were burnt

Ap. c. 40.  
p. 32.

burnt up by a shower of fire and *Brimstone*; of which the Country smells to this day, Nor could *Tuscia* and *Campania* complain of the *Christians*, when a fire from Heaven destroyed the *Vulturni* and the *Pompeii*. None as yet worshipped the true God at *Rome*, when *Hannibal* at *Canna* made such a slaughter of the *Romans*, that the very *Rings* that he took (which were the honourable Badges of none but *Roman Knights*) were measured by the *Buskel*: they were all your gods that then had the general wroship, when the *Gauls* took the *Capitol* it self. So smartly does that grave man retort their own arguments upon themselves. *Arnobius* fully and elegantly pursues *Lib. 1.* this, that in this respect the former times *P. 2, 1.* were no better than these, which they so much complained of, and bids them run over the *Annals* and *Records* that were written in all languages, and they would find that all Nations had frequently had their common miseries and devastations: the clearing of which was likewise the great design *Orosius* proposed to himself, in drawing down the History of the world through all the Ages and Generations of it.

Præfat. ut  
supra. p. 2.

Secondly, Because since the coming of  
Chri-

**Part 1.** *Christianity*, the world had been in a better and more prosperous state than it was before; especially when ever the Christian Religion met with any favour and encouragement; the reason of it *Tertullian* gives: although we should compare present with former miseries, yet they are much lighter now, since God sent *Christians* into the world; for since then, innocency has ballanced the iniquities of the Age, and there have been many who have *interceded* with Heaven. The *Author* of the *Questions* and *Answers* in *Justin Martyr* (for that it was not *Justin* himself, I think no man can doubt, that reads him, the man betraying himself openly enough to have liv'd in the times of *prevailing Christianity*) putting this question, whether *paganism* was not the better Religion, forasmuch as under it there was great prosperity and abundance, whereas 'twas quite otherwise since *Christianity* came in fashion; he answers, among other things, that (besides that plenty was no argument of the goodness of any Religion, *Christians* being to be judged of rather by the holiness than the prosperity of their Religion) there was so much the more abundance in these times of *Christianity*, by

*Apolo. 40.*  
p. 331

*Quest. 126*  
p. 476.

by how much there were fewer Wars, **Part 1.** than was while *Paganism* governed the world. Never were wars more successfully managed, never was prosperity more triumphant, than when *Christians* met with kind entertainment. *Melito*, Bishop of *Sardis*, in an *Oration* which he presented to the Emperour, *M. Antoninus* in behalf of the *Christians* (part whereof is yet extant in *Eusebius*.) tells him that *Christianity* commencing under the Reign of *Augustus* was a good Omen of the prosperity of the Empire, and that ever since, the majesty of the *Roman Empire* had encreased: of whom he being the Heir and Successor, he could not better assure it to himself and his Son, than by protecting that Religion that had been born and bred up together with the Empire, and for which his Ancestors amongst other Religions had had an esteem and honour: that there could be no better argument, that this Religion contributed to the happiness of the Empire (with which it began and had grown up) than that since the Reign of *Augustus* no misfortune, but on the contrary, according to all mens wishes every thing had hapned to be magnificent and prosperous. Hence

*Eusebius*

*Euseb. Hist. lib. 4. c. 26. p. 148.*



**Part 1.** *Eusebius* notes once and again, that the affairs of the Empire commonly flourished, while Christianity was protected, but when that was persecuted, things began to go to rack, and their ancient peace and prosperity could not be retrieved, till peace and tranquillity was restored to the Christians: therefore *Cyprian* tells the *Proconsul*, that their cruelty to the Christians was one of those crying sins that had provoked God to inflict so many heavy miseries upon them, not only refusing to worship God themselves, but unjustly persecuting those innocent persons that did, with all the methods of rage and fierceness. So little hand had the Christians in entailing vengeance upon the world, that their Enemies rather wilfully pull'd it down upon their own heads.

## CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

The Charges brought against them, respecting their life and manners.

The Primitive Christians accused of the grossest sins, Sacrilege, Sedition, Treason, Incest, Murder, &c. The particular consideration of these referred to their proper places. What they offered in the general for their vindication considered. They openly asserted their innocence, and appealed to the known piety of their lives. None accounted Christians, however eminent in profession, unless their lives answerable. Their abstaining from appearance of evil, or doing any thing that symbolized with the idolatrous Rites of the Heathens. Their being willing to be brought to the strictest trial, and to be severely punished, if found guilty of those crimes. Their complaints of being (generally) condemned, meerly for bearing the name of Christians. They greatly gloried in that title. This name prohibited by Julian, and Christians commanded in scorn

Part I.

to be called Galileans. The Christians appealed for their vindication to the Consciences of their impartial Enemies, and by them acquitted. The testimonies of Pliny, Ser. Grannianus, Antoninus Pius, M. Antoninus, Trypho the Jew, and Apollo's Oracle to this purpose. The excellency of Christians if compared with the best of Heathens. All such disowned for Christians, as did not exactly conform to the rule and discipline of Christianity.

ALL the attempts that had been hitherto made against the honour and reputation of Christians, seemed but like the *first skirmishings* of an Army, in respect of the main *Battalia* that was yet behind, the Charge that was made against their *moral carriage and behaviour*; and here they were accused at every turn of no less than *sacrilege, sedition, and High-Treason, of incest and promiscuous mixtures, of murder, and eating the flesh of Infants* at their sacramental Feasts: These were sad and horrid crimes, and had they been true, would justly have made Christianity stink in the nostrils of all sober and considering men: but they were as *false* as they

Part I.

they were *black and hellish*: the particular Answers to these Charges (together with some things relating to matters of Worship) shall be considered hereafter, according as they fall in in their more proper places; I shall only at present take notice of the general vindication which the Christians made of themselves, from these Indictments that were brought in against them; and the sum of what they pleaded lyes especially in these three things.

First, They did openly assert and maintain their *innocency*, and shew by their *lives* as well as their *Apologies*, that they were men of quite another make and temper, than their Enemies did generally represent them: their Religion and way of life was admired by all: who (*says S. Clement to the Corinthians*) Clem. Ep. ad Corinth. p. 2. 4. did ever dwell amongst you, that did not approve of your excellent and unshaken Faith; that did not wonder at your sober and moderate piety in Christ? you were forward to every good work, adorned with a most virtuous and venerable conversation, doing all things in the fear of God, and having his Laws and Commands written upon the tables of your hearts. They placed Religion then

Part I. then not in *talking finely*, but in *living well*. Amongst us (*says Athenagoras*) the meanest and most mechanick persons, and old women, although not able to *discourse* and *dispute* for the usefulness of their profession, do yet demonstrate it in their lives and actions; they don't indeed critically weigh their *words*, and recite elegant *Orations*, but they manifest *honest* and *virtuous* actions; while being buffeted they strike not again, nor sue them at Law that spoil and plunder them; *Liberally give to them that ask, and love their neighbours as themselves*. And this we do, because we are assured that there is a God that superintends humane affairs, who made both us and the whole world, and because we must give to him an account of all the transactions of our lives; therefore we chuse the most moderate, humane, and benign, and, to many, the most contemptible course of life, for we reckon that no evil in this life can be so great, though we should be called to lay down our lives, which ought not to be esteemed little and of no value, in comparison of that happiness which we hereafter look for from the great Judge of the world; promised to those who are of

an

Leg. pro  
Christ.  
p. 12.

an humble, benign, and moderate conversation. *Clemens of Alexandria* gives us this short account of them; as the fairest possession we give up our selves to God, entirely loving him, and reckoning this the great business of our lives: no man is with us a *Christian*, or accounted truly rich, temperate, and generous, but he that is pious and religious, nor does any farther bear the image of God, than he speaks and believes what is just and holy: *so that this in short is the state of us who follow God*; such as are our *desires*, such are our *discourses*; such as are our *discourses*, such are our *actions*; such as are our *actions*, such is our *life*; so universally good is the whole life of *Christians*. Certainly none were ever greater Enemies to a naked profession, and the covering a bad life under the title of *Christianity*. Do any live otherwise than Christ hath commanded, 'tis a most certain argument they are no *Christians*, though with their tongues they never so smoothly profess the Christian Doctrine; for 'tis not *meer Professors*, but those who live according to their profession, that shall be saved, as *Justin Martyr* declares before the *Emperours*. Let no man (*says*

Adminit.  
ad gent.  
p. 76.

Ap. 2. p. 63.

G

Basil)

Part 1. *Basil*) impose upon himself with inconsiderate words, saying, though I be a sinner, yet I am a *Christian*, and I hope that title will be my shelter; but hearken sinner, all wicked men shall be bundled up together, and in the great day of the divine vengeance shall be indifferently thrown into those merciless and devouring Flames.

Lib. 7.  
p. 375.

Nay so careful were they to avoid all sin, that they stood at a wide distance from any thing, that though lawful in it self, yet seemed to carry an *ill colour* with it; this *Origen* tells *Celsus* was the reason why they refused to do any honour to an *Image*, lest thereby they should give occasion to others to think that they ascribed divinity to them: for this reason they shunn'd all community with the Rites and Customs of the Heathens, *abstaining from things strangled*, or that had been offered to *Idols*, from frequenting the *publick Bathes*, or going to the *Sights* and *Shows*, because they seemed to owe their original to *idolatry*, and were the occasion of many gross enormities; they refused to wear *Crowns* of *Laurel*, lest they should seem to patronize the Custom of the Gentiles, who were wont to do so in their sacred and

and solemn Rites, as appeared eminent-Part 1. ly in the Solemnities of the Emperours *Severus* and *Caracalla*, when the *Tribune* delivering the *donative* to the Souldiers, and all came to receive it with Crowns upon their *heads*, one of them brought his in his hand, and being demanded the reason, answered that he was a *Christian*, and could not do it; which was the occasion of *Tertullian's* Book *de Corona Militis*, wherein he sets himself to defend it.

Secondly, They were willing to put themselves upon the *strictest* trial, and to undergo the *severest* penalties, if found guilty of those Crimes that were charged upon them: So their *Apologist* bespeaks the *Emperours*; we beseech you (*says he*) that those things that are charged upon the *Christians* may be enquired into, and if they be found to be so, let them have their deserved punishment, nay let them be more severely punished than other men: but if not guilty, then 'tis not reasonable, that innocent persons should suffer meerly upon report and clamour. And speaking of those that only took sanctuary at the name of *Christians*, he adds, that those who lived not according to the Laws

Just. Mart.  
tyr. Ap. 2.  
p. 54.

# 84 Primitive Christianity. Ch. 4.

Part 1. of *Christ*, and were only called by his name, they begg'd of them that such might be punished. To the same purpose *Athenagoras* in his *Embassy*, taking notice how their Enemies laid wait for their lives and fortunes, loaded them with heaps of reproaches, charging them with things that never so much as entred into their minds, and of which their accusers themselves were most guilty; he makes this offer; let but any of us be convict of any crime either small or great, and we refuse not to be punished, nay, are ready to undergo the most cruel and heavy penalty: but if we be only accused for our name (and to this day all our accusations are but the figments of obscure and uncertain fame, no Christian having ever been convict of any fault) then we hope it will become such *wise*, *gracious*, and *mighty* Princes as you are, to make such Laws as may secure us from those wrongs and injuries. But alas, so clear was their innocency, that their bitterest adversaries durst not suffer them to come to a fair open tryal; if you be so certain that we are guilty. (*says Tertullian to the Heathens*) why then are we not treated in the same nature with all male-

Leg pro  
Christian  
p. 3.

Ap c. 2.  
p. 2.

# Ch 4 Primitive Christianity. 85

*factors*; who have leave both by them-Part 1.  
selves and their *advocates* to defend their innocency, to answer and put in pleas, it being unlawful to condemn any before they be heard, and have liberty to defend themselves; whereas Christians only are not permitted to speak any thing that might clear their cause, maintain the truth, and make the Judge able to pronounce righteous sentence: 'tis enough to justify the publick *odium*, if we do but confess our selves *Christians*, without ever examining of the crime; contrary to the manner of procedure against all other Delinquents, whom 'tis not enough barely to charge to be *murderers*, *sacrilegious*, or *incestuous*, or *enemies* to the *Publick* (the *titles* you are pleased to bestow upon us) unless they also take the quality of the fact, the place, manner, time, partners and accessories under examination. But no such favour is shewn to us, but we are condemned without any *inquisition* passed upon us. And good reason there was, that they should take this course, seeing they could really find nothing to condemn them for, but for being *Christians*. This one would think strange, especially amongst a people so renowned for

Part 1. *justice and equity as the Romans were, and yet in these times nothing more ordinary; therefore when Urbicius the Pre-*

*Just. Mart. Ap. 1. p. 43.* *fect of Rome had condemned Ptolomeus merely upon his confessing himself a Christian, one Lucius that stood by cried out, What strange course is this, what infamous misdemeanour is this man guilty of; that when he's no adulterer, fornicator, no murtherer, no thief, or robber, thou shouldst punish him only because he calls himself a Christian? certainly, Urbicius, such justice as this does not become the piety of the Emperour, or the Philosophy of Cæsar his Son, or the sacred and venerable Senate. And Tertullian tells us, 'twas the common accusation they had in their mouths, such or such a one is a goodman, only he is a Christian; or, I wonder at such a one, a wise man, but lately turned*

*Ad Deme. trian. pag. 200.* *Christian. So Cyprian, I remember, reduces his adversary to this unavoidable dilemma; chuse one of these two things, to be a Christian, either is a fault, or 'tis not; if it be a fault, why dost thou not*

*Vid. Tertul. Ap. c. 1, 2, 3. J. Mart. Ap. 2 p. 54. 68, 69. Athenag. leg pro Christian. p. 3, 4.* *kill every one that confesses it? if it be not, why dost thou persecute them that are innocent? Hence we find nothing more common in the old Apologists, than complaints concerning the unreasonableness*

*bleness of being accused, condemned, Part 1. and punished, meerly for their name, this being the first and great cause of all that hatred and cruelty that was exercised towards them, 'twas the innocent name that was hated in them, all the quarrel was about this title, and when a Christian was guilty of nothing else, 'twas this made him guilty, as Tertullian complains at every turn. The truth is, they mightily gloried in this title, and were ambitious to own it in the face of the greatest danger; therefore when Attalus the famous French Martyr was led about the Amphitheatre, that he might be exposed to the hatred and derision of the people, he triumphed in this, that a tablet was carried before him with this Inscription, THIS IS ATTALUS THE CHRISTIAN. And Sanctus lb. p. 158. another of them being oft asked by the President, what his name was, what his City and Country, and whether he was a Free-man or a Servant, answered nothing more to any of them, than that he was a Christian, professing this name to be Country, Kindred, and all things to him. Nay so great was the honour and value which they had for this name, that Julian the Emperour (whom we commonly*

Part 1. monly call the *Apostate*) endeavoured by all ways to suppress it, that when he could not drive the thing, he might at least banish the name out of the world; and therefore did not only himself constantly call Christians *Galileans*, but made a *Law*, that they should be called only by that name. But to return, the sum is this, the Christians were so buoy'd up with the conscience of their innocence, that they cared not who saw them, were willing and desirous to be scann'd and searched to the bottom, and to lye open to the view of all; and therefore desired no other favour, than that that *Apologie* which *Justin Martyr* presented to them, might be set out with the Decree of the *Senate*, that so people might come to the true knowledge of their case, and they be delivered from false suspicions, and these accusations, for which they had been undeservedly exposed to so many punishments.

Thirdly, They appealed for their vindication to the judgment and consciences of their more sober and impartial Enemies, and were accordingly acquitted by them, as guiltless of any hainous crimes. *Pliny* the younger being com-

*Naz. in-  
vest. in Ju-  
lian. 1.  
p. 81.*

*Ap. 1 p. 51.*

manded

manded by the Emperour *Trajan*, to Part 1. give him an account of the *Christians*, tells him, that after the best estimate that *Epist. l. 10. Ep. 97.* he could take, and the strictest inquiry that he could make by tortures, he found no worse of them than this, that they were wont to meet early for the performance of their solemn devotions, and to bind themselves under the most *sacred obligations*; to commit no vice or wickedness, and that their Religion was nothing else but an untoward and immoderate superstition. This is the *testimony* which that great man, (who being *Proconsul* of *Bithynia* was capable to satisfy himself, and who was no less diligent to search into the matter) gives concerning them. Next after him *Se-* *Ensch. Hist. c. 1. 4. c. 8. 9. p. 122.* *verus Granianus* the *Proconsul* of *Asia*, writes to the Emperour *Adrian* (*Trajan's* successor) to represent to him how unjust it was to put Christians to death, when no crime was duly laid to their charge, meerly to gratifie the tumultuous clamours of the people, to whom the *Emperour* answers, that they should not be unjustly troubled, that if any thing was truly prov'd against them, he should punish them according to the nature of the fault; but if done out of malice

Part 1. malice or spite, he should then accordingly punish the accuser as a calumniator. Next to *Adrian*, *Antoninus Pius* (if he be not mistaken for his successor *Marcus*) in his Epistle to the *Commons* of *Asia*, tells them, that they had traduced the *Christians*, and had objected those crimes to them, which they could not prove; that they were more firm and undaunted in their profession than themselves, and had a greater freedom with and confidence towards God; and that therefore he resolved to ratifie and follow the determination of his Father. After him comes *M. Antoninus*, who having obtained that famous and signal Victory against the *Quades* in *Germany*, confesses in his Letter to the Senate (which Letter, though I know 'tis questioned by some learned men, as now extant; whether true and genuine, yet that there was such a Letter is evident enough from *Tertullian*, who himself lived within a few years of that time, and appeals to it) that it was clearly gotten by the prayers of the *Christian Legion* which he had in his Army, and therefore commands that none be molested for being Christians, and that if any accuse a Christian for being such, without

J. Martyr.  
Ap. 2. p.  
100.

ἰουαννῆς  
μαρτύρου.

ib. p. 101,  
102.

Ap. c. 6. p. 6.  
ad Scap.  
c. p. 4. 71.

without a sufficient crime proved against Part 1. him, he shall be burnt alive for his accusation, that a Christian confessing himself to be one shall be safe and secure, and that the *Governour* of the *Province* shall not drive him to renounce his profession, and this he commands to be confirmed by the Decree of the *Senate*. So clear did the Christians appear to their greatest Enemies, especially in their more calm and sober intervals. Nay *Trypho* the *Jew* (and that very notion speaks him enemy enough, yet) confesses them clear of those foul aspersions; for when the *Martyr* had asked him, whether he disliked the Christians manners and way of life, and whether he really believed that they ate mens flesh, and putting out the Candles ran together in promiscuous mixtures? the *Jew* answered, that those things whereof they were accused by many were unworthy of belief, as being so extremely abhorrent to humane nature; and that the precepts which are commanded in their Gospel (which his curiosity had prompted him to read) were so great and admirable, that he supposed no man could be able to keep and obey them. And to instance in no more, the *Hea-then*

J. Mart.  
dial cum  
Tryph. p.  
227.



Part 1. *then Oracle* it self pronounced in favour of the Christians ; for *Apollo* giving forth his Oracles, not as he was wont by humane voice, but out of a dark and dismal cavern, confessed it was because of *just men* that lived upon the earth ; and when *Dioclesian* enquired who those just men were, one of the Heathen *Priests* that stood by answered, that they were *the Christians*. This *Constantine the Great* tells he himself heard, being then a young man, and in company at that time with the Emperour *Dioclesian*, and he there solemnly calls God to witness for the truth of the story.

From all which it appears how innocent the *Christians* were of those things which the *Gentiles* charged upon them, how infinitely strict and unblameable in their lives, and therefore triumphed over the Heathens in the purity and innocency of their conversations. *Origen* tells *Celsus*, that the Churches of God which had taken upon them the discipline of *Christ*, if compared to the common Societies of men, were amongst them like lights in the world. For who (*says he*) is there, but he must needs confess that the worser part of our Church is much better than the popular assemblies ;

*Enseb. de  
vit. Con-  
stant. l. 2.  
c. 50. 51.  
p. 467.*

*Lib. 3. p.  
128, 129.*

assemblies ; as for instance, the Church Part 1.  
of God at *Athens* is meek and quiet, as endeavouring to approve it self to the great God ; whereas now the popular assembly of *Athens* is seditious and tumultuous, and no ways to be compared with the Church of God in that City ; and the same may be said of the Churches of God, and the vulgar assemblies which are at *Corinth*, or *Alexandria*. So *Mi-* Pag. 29.  
*nucius Felix*, should we Christians be compared with you, although our Discipline may seem somewhat inferiour, yet we should be found infinitely to transcend you : you forbid adultery, and then practise it ; we keep entirety to our own Wives ; you punish wickedness when committed, with us even a wicked thought is sin ; you stand in awe of those who are conscious of your crimes, we of nothing but our consciences, without which we cannot be ; and last of all 'tis with your party that the Prison is filled and crowded, no Christian is there, unless such a one as is either a shame to his Religion, or an Apostate from it : and a little after he tells his adversary, Pag. 31.  
how much they exceeded the best Philosophers, who were filthy and tyrannical, and only eloquent to declaim against

Part I. against those vices of which themselves were most guilty: that we Christians do not measure wisdom by mens habits, but by their minds and tempers, and do not speak great things, but live them, having this to boast of, that we really attain to those things which they earnestly sought, but could not find. Thus *Lactantius* having excellently discoursed of the prodigious debaucheries and wickednesses of the Heathens; but which of these things (*says he*) can be objected to our people, whose whole Religion is to live *without spot or blemish*? from whence they might easily gather, had they any understanding, that piety is on our side, and that they themselves are vile and impious. And *Ensebius* tells us, that in his time the Christian Faith had by gravity, sincerity, modesty, and holiness of life, so conquered all opposition, that none durst bespatter it, or charge it with any of those calumnies, which the ancient Enemies of our Religion used to fasten upon it. What Religion (*says Arnobius*) can be truer, more useful, powerful, just than this? which (as he elsewhere notes) renders men meek, speakers of truth, modest, chaste, charitable, kind

*De justit.*  
l. 5 c. 9.  
p. 485.

*Hist. Eccles.* l. 4.  
c. 7. p. 121.  
*vid. Constant. Or.*  
*ad catum.*  
S. S. c. 23.  
p. 599.

*Adv. Gent.*  
lib. 4. 67.

kind and helpful to all, as if most nearly related to us; and indeed this is the genuine and natural tendency of the Christian Doctrine, and which it cannot but effect, where-ever 'tis kindly embraced and entertained. So true is that which *Athenagoras* told the Emperours, that no Christian could be a bad man, unless he were an hypocrite; and *Tertullian* openly declares, that when men depart from the discipline of the Gospel, they so far cease amongst us to be accounted Christians: and therefore when the Heathens objected, that some that went under that name were guilty of great enormities, and enquired how comes such a one to be a cheat, if the Christians be so righteous; how so cruel, if they be merciful? he answers, that by this very thing they bore witness, that they who were real Christians were not such; that there's a vast difference between the crime and the name, the opinion and the truth; that they are not presently Christians that are called so, but cheat others by the pretence of a name; that they shunn'd the company of such, and did not meet or partake with them in the offices of Religion; that they did not admit those whom

*Leg. pro Christian.*  
p. 4.

*Apol. c. 46.*  
p. 36.

*Ad Nation.*  
l. 1. c. 5.  
p. 43.

meer

Part I. meer force and cruelty had driven to deny *Christianity*, much less such as voluntarily transgressed the Christian Discipline; and that therefore the Heathens did very ill to call them *Christians*, whom the Christians themselves did disown, who yet were not wont to deny their own party.

### CHAP. V.

Of the positive parts of their Religion: and first of their piety towards God.

*The Religion of the ancient Christians considered, with respect to God, themselves, and other men. Their piety seen in two things, their detestation of Idolatry, and great care about the matters of divine Worship. What notion they had of Idolatry; their abhorrency of it. Their refusing to give divine honour to Angels and created Spirits; this condemned by the Laodicean Council. Their denying any thing of divine honour to Martyrs and departed Saints. The famous instance of the Church of Smyrna*

*Smyrna concerning S. Polycarp. S. Augustine's testimonies to this purpose. Their mighty abhorrence of the Heathen Idolatry. The very making an Idol accounted unlawful. Hatred of Idolatry one of the first principles instilled into new Converts. Their affectionate bemoaning any that lapsed into this sin. Several severe penalties imposed by the ancient Council of Illiberis upon persons guilty of Idolatry. They were willing to hazard any thing rather than sacrifice to the Gods. Constantius his plot to try the integrity of his Courtiers. A double instance of the Christian Souldiers in Julian's Army. Their active zeal in breaking the Images of the Heathen gods, and assaulting persons while doing sacrifice to them; this whether justifiable. Notwithstanding all this, the Christians accused by the Heathens of Idolatry; of worshipping the Sun: whence that charge arose. Of adoring a Cross. Of worshipping an Asses head. Christians called Asinarii. The absurd and monstrous Picture of Christ mentioned by Tertullian. The occasion of this ridiculous fiction whence.*

H

Having

## Part 1.

Tit. 2. 12.

HAVING thus seen with how much clearness the ancient Christians vindicated themselves from those unjust aspersions, which their spiteful and malicious adversaries had cast upon them; we come now to take a more direct and positive view of their Religion; which according to S. Paul's division, we shall consider as to their *piety* towards God; those *virtues* which more immediately concern'd *themselves*, and those which respected their behaviour and carriage towards *others*. Their *piety* towards God appeared in those two main instances of it, a serious and hearty detestation of **Idolatry**, and a religious care about the concerns of **Divine Worship**.

De idolo-  
lat c. 1.  
p. 85.

Conc. Illi-  
berit. Can.  
1.

**Idolatry** in those times was the prevailing sin of the world; *the principal crime of mankind, the great guilt of the Age, and the almost sole cause of mens being brought into judgment*, as what in a manner contains all sins under it, as *Tertullian* begins his Book upon that subject; a crime of the *first rank*, and one of the *highest sorts of wickedness*, as 'tis called by the most ancient Council in *Spain*. They looked upon it as a sin that

that undermined the very being of the Deity, and ravished the honour of his Crown. Before we proceed any further, we shall first enquire what was the notion they generally had of Idolatry; and they then accounted that a man was guilty of Idolatry, when he gave *divine adoration* to any thing that was *not God*, not only when he worshipped a *material Idol*, but when he vested *any creature* with that religious respect and veneration that was *only* due to God: Idolatry (*says Tertullian*) robs God, denying him those honours that are due to him, and conferring them upon others, so that at the same time it does both *defraud* him and *reproach* him; and a little after he expressly affirms, that whatever is exalted above the Standard of *civil Worship*, in imitation of the divine excellency, is directly made an Idol: thus S. Gregory, for his solid and excellent learning call'd *the Divine* (a title never given to any besides him but to St. John the Apostle) defines Idolatry (which, *says he*, is the greatest evil in the world) to be *the translation of that worship that is due to the Creator upon the Creature*. Accordingly we find them infinitely zealous to assert divine adoration, as

Or. supra  
c. 11.

Ib. c. 15.  
p. 95.

Greg. Naz.  
Orat. Pa-  
neg. in Na-  
stiv. Ch. 1.  
Sti Or. 38.  
p. 620.

Part 1. the proper and incommunicable prerogative of God alone, and absolutely refusing to impart religious Worship to any though the best of Creatures; surely if any, one would think *Angels*, the first rank of *created* beings, creatures of such sublime excellencies and perfections, might have challenged it at their hands; but hear what *Origen* says to this; we adore (*says he*) our Lord God, and serve him *alone*, following the example of *Christ*, who when tempted by the Devil to fall down and worship him, answered, *thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*; which is the reason why we refuse to give honours to those spirits that *preside* over humane affairs, because *we cannot serve two Masters*; to wit, God and *Mammon*: as for these *Demons*, we know that they have no administration of the conveniencies of mans life: yea, though we know that they are not *Demons*, but *Angels*, that have the Government of fruits and seasons, and the productions of Animals committed to them; we indeed speak *well* of them, and think them *happy*, that they are intrusted by God to manage the conveniencies of mans life; but yet do not give them that honour

Contr. Cels.  
l. 8. p. 415.  
416.

honour that is only due to God; for Part 1. this neither does God allow of, neither do they desire it; but equally love and regard us when we do not, as if we did sacrifice to them. And when *Celsus* a little before had smartly pressed him to do honour to *Demons*, he rejects the motion with great contempt, away (*says Pag. 395* he) with this counsel of *Celsus*, who in this is not in the least to be hearkned to; for the great God only is to be adored, and prayers to be delivered up to none but his only begotten Son, *the first born of every creature*, that as *our High-Priest* he may carry them to *his Father* and to *our Father*, to *his God* and to *our God*. 'Tis true that the Worship of *Angels* did (and that very early, as appears from the *Apostles* caveat against it in his *Epistle to the Colossians*) creep into some parts of the Christian Church, but was always disowned and cryed out against, and at last publicly and solemnly condemned by the whole *Laodicean Council*: *it is not lawful* (*says the thirty fifth Canon of that Council*) *for Christians to leave the Church of God, and to go and invoke Angels, and to make prohibited assemblies: if therefore any one shall be found devoting himself to this*

Part I. *this private Idolatry, let him be accursed; forasmuch as he has forsaken the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and has delivered up himself to Idolatry.* From which nothing can be more clear, than that it was the sense of these *Fathers*, that the *worshipping of Angels* was not only downright *Idolatry*, but a plain *apostasy* from the Christian Faith.

Nor were they more peremptory in denying divine honour to *Angels*, than they were to *Martyrs* and departed *Saints*: for though they had a mighty honour and respect for *Martyrs* (as we shall take notice afterwards) as those that had maintained the truth of their Religion, and seal'd it with their blood, and therefore did what they could to do praise and honour to their memories, yet were they far from placing any thing of Religion or divine adoration in it; whereof 'twill be enough to quote one famous instance. The Church of *Smyrna*

*Euseb Hist. Eccl. l. 4. c. 15. p. 134* *na* writing to the Churches of *Pontus*, to give them an account of the martyrdom of *Polycarpus* their Bishop, tells them, that after he was dead, many of the Christians were desirous to have gotten the *remains* of his body (possibly to have given them decent and honourable burial)

rial) but were prevented in it by some Part I. *Jews*, who importun'd the *Proconsul* to the contrary, suggesting that the Christians leaving their crucified Master, might henceforth worship *Polycarpus*, whereupon they add, that this suggestion must needs proceed from ignorance of the true state of Christians; *this they did* (say they) *not considering how impossible 'tis that ever we should either forsake Christ, who died for the salvation of mankind, or that we should worship any other. We adore him as the Son of God; but the Martyrs, as the Disciples and Followers of our Lord, we deservedly love for their eminent kindness to their own Prince and Master; whose Companions and Fellow-Disciples we also by all means desire to be.* This instance is so much the more valuable in this case, not only because so plain and pertinent but because so ancient, and from persons of so great authority in the Church: For this is not the testimony of any one private person, but of the whole Church of *Smyrna*, according as it had been trained up under the Doctrine and Discipline of *Polycarpus*, the immediate Disciple of *S. John*. This was the Doctrine and practice of Christians

Part I. then, and it held so for some Ages after, even down to the times of S. *Augustine*, when yet in many other things the simplicity of the Christian Religion began to decline apace: we set apart (*says he*) no *Temples*, nor *Priests*, nor *divine services*, nor *sacrifices to Martyrs*; because they are *not God*, but the same who is theirs, is our God: indeed we honour their *memories*, as of holy men, who have stood for the truth, even unto death, that so the true Religion might appear, and those which are false be convinc'd to be so: but who ever heard a *Priest* standing at the *Altar*, built for the honour and worship of God over the body of the holy *Martyr*, to say in his *Prayers*, *I offer sacrifice to thee Peter, or Paul, or Cyprian*; for in such commemorations we offer to that God, who made them both men and Martyrs, and has made them partners with holy Angels in the heavenly glory; and by these solemnities we both give thanks to the true God for the victories which they have gain'd, and also stir up our selves by begging his assistance, to contend for such crowns and rewards as they are possessed of; so that whatever offices religious men perform in the places of

the

*Aug. de  
Civ. Dei.  
l. 8. c. 27.  
p. 492. vid.  
l. 22. c. 10.  
col. 1355.*

the *Martyrs*, they are only *ornaments to Part I.* their memories, not *sacrifices* or divine services done to the departed, as if they were Deities. More to the same purpose we may find in that place, as also in infinite other places of his Works, where (were it worth the while) I could easily shew that he does no less frequently than expressly assert, that though the *honour of love, respect, and imitation*, yet no *religious adoration* is due either to *Angels, Martyrs, or departed Saints*.

But the great instance, wherein the primitive *Christians* manifested their detestation of Idolatry was in respect of the *idolatrous Worship* of the Heathen world, the denying and abhorring any thing of divine honour that was done to their gods. They looked upon the very *making* of Idols (though with no intention to worship them) as an unlawful trade, and as inconsistent with Christianity: *how have we renounced the Devil and his Angels* (*says Tertullian*, meaning their solemn renunciation in baptism) *if we make Idols, nor is it enough to say, though I make them, I do not worship them; there being the same cause not to make them, that there is not to worship them; viz. the offence that*

*De Idolol.  
lat. c. 6.  
p. 88.*

Part 1. *that in both is done to God: yet thou dost so far worship them, as thou makest them that others may worship them: and therefore he roundly pronounces, that*

*Cap. 11. p. 92. vid. c. 9. 10.* no Art, no Profession, no service whatsoever that is employed either in *making* or *ministering* to Idols, can come short of Idolatry. They startled at any thing that had but the least shadow of symbolizing with them in their Idolatry; therefore

*Can. 7.* the Ancyran Council condemned them to a two years suspension from the Sacrament, who sat down with their Heathen friends upon their solemn Festivals in their Idol-Temples, although they brought their own Provisions along with them, and touched not one bit of what had been offered to the Idol. Their first care in instructing new Converts, was to leave them with the hatred of Idolatry: *those that are to be initiated into our*

*Adv. Cels. l. 3. p. 120.* Religion (says Origen) we do before all things instil into them a dislike and contempt of all Idols and Images, and lift up their minds from worshipping Creatures instead of God, to him who is the great Creator of the world. If any through weakness chanced at any time to lapse into this sin, how pathetically did they bewail it? So Celerinus in his

Epistle

Epistle to Lucian, giving him an account Part 1. of a woman that to avoid persecution had done sacrifice, and thereby fallen from Christ, he bewails her as dead, tells him that it stuck so close to him, that though in the time of Easter, a time of festivity and rejoicing, yet he wept night and day, and kept company with sackcloth and ashes, and resolved to do so, till by the help of Christ and the prayers of good men, she should by repentance be raised up again. The better to prevent this sin (wherein weaker Christians were sometimes ensnared in those times of cruelty and persecution) the discipline of the ancient Church was very severe against it, of which we can have no better evidence, than to take a little view of the determinations relating to this case of that ancient Council of *Inter Epist. Cyp. Ep. 20. p. 32.* *Il-ber. Can. 2. vid. not. Albaspin. p. 5. & de vii. Eccles. Obs. 22.* liberis, held some years before the time of Constantine; there we find, that if any Christian after Baptism took upon him the Flaminship or Priesthood of the Gentiles (an Office ordinarily devolved upon the better sort, and which Christians sometimes either made suit for, to gain more favour with the people, or had it forc'd upon them by the Laws of the Country, so that they must either undergo



**Part I.** undergo it, or flye and forfeit their Estates) such a one no not at the hour of death was to be received into the *Communion* of the Church. The reason of which severity was, because who ever underwent that Office must do *sacrifice* to the gods, and entertain the people with several kinds of Sights, Plays, and Sports, which could not be managed without murders, and the exercise of all lust and filthiness, whereby they did *double* and *treble* their sin, as that Council speaks. If a Christian in that Office did but allow the *charges* to maintain those Sports and Sights (although he did not *actually* sacrifice, which he might avoid, by substituting a *Gentile* Priest in his room) he was indeed to be taken into communion at last, but was to undergo a very severe *penance* for it all his life. Nay although he did neither of the former, yet if he did but wear a *Crown* (a thing usually done by the Heathen Priests) he was to be excluded from communion for *two years* together. If a Christian went up to the *Capitol* (probably out of curiosity) only to see the sacrifices of the Gentiles, and did not see them, yet he should be as guilty as if he had seen them, his intention and will being

*Vid. Can.*  
*3. p. 8.*

*Can. 55.*  
*p. 69.*

*Can. 59.*  
*p. 71.*

being the same, as the learned *Albaspine* **Part I.** (and I think truly) understands the *Canon*; and in such a case, if the person *Can. 41.*  
*p. 57.* was one of the *faithful*, he was not to be received till after *ten years* repentance. Every Master of a Family was commanded to suffer no *little Idols* or *Images* to be kept in his house, to be worshipped by his Children or Servants; but if this could not be done without danger of being betrayed and accused by his Servants (a thing not unusual in those times) that then at least he himself should abstain from them; otherwise to be thrown out of the Church. Being imbued with such *principles*, and train'd up under such a *discipline* as this, 'tis no wonder if they would *do* or *suffer* any thing rather than comply with the least symptom of Idolatry; they willingly underwent banishment and confiscation, amongst several of which fort *Caldonius* *Ep. 18. p. 30* tells *Cyprian* of one *Bona*, who being violently drawn by her Husband to sacrifice, they by force guiding her hand to do it, cryed out and protested against it, that 'twas not *she* but *they* that did it, and was thereupon sent into banishment. They freely laid down their greatest honours and dignities, rather than by any  
*idola-*

Part I. *idolatrous* act to offer violence to their consciences. Whereof *Constantius*, the Father of *Constantine*, made this wise experiment, he gave out that all the Officers and great men of the *Court* should either do sacrifice to the gods, or immediately quit his service, and the Offices and preferments which they held under him; whereupon many turned about, while others remained firm and unshaken; upon this the prudent and excellent Prince discovered his Plot, embraced, commended, and advanced to greater honours those who were faithful to their Religion and their conscience; reproaching and turning off those who were so ready to quit and forfeit them. Thus *Jovianus* a man of considerable note and quality, and an Officer of great place in *Julian's* Army, when the Emperour sent out his Edict, that all the Souldiers should either sacrifice, or lay down their Arms, presently threw away his *belt*, rather than obey that impious command; though the Emperour at that time, for reasons of State would not suffer him to depart. And after the death of *Julian*, when by the unanimous vote of the whole Army he was chosen Emperour, he utterly refused

*Euseb. de  
vit. Con-  
stant. l. 1. c.  
19. p. 417.*

*Socr. Hist.  
Eccles. l. 3.  
c. 22. p. 195*

Part I. refused it, 'till the Army had renounced their *Pagan* idolatry and superstition. And though 'tis true, that *life* is dearest to men of all things in this world; yet how chearfully did they chuse rather to shed their blood, than to defile their consciences with Idolatry; of which *Eusebius* gives us many instances, and indeed this was the common test in those times, either *sacrifice* or *die*. *Phileas* Bishop of *Thmuis* in a Letter to his people, giving them an account of the martyrdoms that hapned at *Alexandria*, tells them, that many after having endured strange and unheard of torments, were put to their choice, whether they would sacrifice and be set at liberty, or refuse and lose their heads; whereupon all of them without any hesitation readily went to embrace death; knowing well how the Scripture is, *that whoever sacrifices to strange gods shall be cut off*; and again, *thou shalt have no other gods but me*. And in the next Chapter *Eusebius* tells us of a whole City of Christians in *Phrygia*, which together with all the men, women and children was burnt to ashes, for no other reason, but because they universally confessed themselves to be *Christians*,

*Euseb. Hist.  
Eccles. l. 8.  
c. 10. p. 304*

Part I. *ans*, and refused to obey those that commanded them to worship Idols: instances of which kind there are enough to be met with in the *Histories* of the Church.

And so fix'd and unmoveable were they in this, that no promises or hopes of reward, no fears or threatnings could either tempt or startle them; memorable a passage or two that we meet withal to this purpose: it was a custom amongst the *Romans* to show some respect and honour not only to the *Emperours* themselves, but even to their *Statues* and *Images*, by bowing the body, or some other act of external veneration. Now

*Naz. Orat. invect. 1. in Julian. Or. 13. p. 83. vid. Som. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 17.*

*Julian* the Emperour (whose great design was to reduce all men, but especially his Army back to Paganism and Idolatry) made use of this crafty project; he placed the Pictures of *Jupiter*, and other Heathen gods, so close to his own *Statues*, that they could not bow to the one, but they must also to the other; politickly reducing them to this strait, that either they must refuse to pay civil honour to their Prince (which had been a sufficient crime against them) or seem at least to do *honour* to the gods; with this device the less *wary* and cautelous

Part I. *telous* were entrapped; but others that were more pious and prudent chose rather to deny the Prince that civil homage, and fall into the arms of martyrdom, than by such an ambiguous adoration to seem to patronize Idolatry. At another time he fell upon this stratagem: upon a solemn day, when the Emperours were wont to bestow *Largeſſes* upon the *Souldiers*, he caused the Army to be called before him, sitting then in great pomp and splendour, and a large *donative* of Gold to be laid on the one side, and a heap of *Frankincense* with fire by it on the other, proclamation being made, that they that would sacrifice the *one*, should have the *other*. By this means many of the Christian Souldiers were ensnared, performed the Sacrifice, received the Donative, and went home jolly and secure. But being at Dinner with their Companions, and drinking to each other (as the custom was) with their eyes lift up, and calling upon *Christ*, and making the *Sign of the Cross*, as oft as they took the Cup into their hands; one at the Table told them, he wondred how they could call upon *Christ*, whom they had so lately abjur'd. Amazed at this, and asking how they

Part I. they had abjured him, they were told, that they had *sacrificed*, which was all one as to *deny Christ*. Whereupon starting up from the Table, they ran up and down the Market-place in a furious and frantick manner, crying out, *we are Christians, we are Christians in heart and truth*; and let all the world take notice, that there is but *one God*, to whom we *live*, and for whom we'll *dye*; we have not broken the faith which we swore to thee, *O blessed Saviour*, nor renounced our profession; if our *hands* be guilty, our *hearts* are innocent, 'tis not the *Gold* that has corrupted us, but the Emperours *craftiness* that deceived us: and with that running to the Emperour, they threw down their *Gold* before him, with this address, we have not, *Sir*, received a donative, but are condemned to dye; instead of being *honoured* we are *vilified* and disgraced; take this *Largess* and give it to your *Souldiers*; as for us, kill us and sacrifice us to *Christ*, whom alone we owne as our highest Prince; return us *fire for fire*, and for the *ashes* of the sacrifice, reduce us to *ashes*. Cut off those *hands*, which we so wickedly stretched out; those *feet* that carried us to so great a mischief; give others the *Gold*,

*Gold*, who may have no cause to repent Part I. on't; for our part *Christ* is enough for us, whom we value instead of all things. With this noble and generous resolution though the Emperour was highly enraged, yet because he envied them the honour of *martyrdom*, he would not put them to death, but banished them, and inflicted other penalties which might sufficiently evidence his rage against them.

Nay with so warm a zeal were they acted against Idolatry, that many of them could not contain themselves from falling foul upon it, where-ever they met it, though with the immediate hazard of their lives. So *Romanus* Deacon and Exorcist of the Church of *Cæsaria* seeing great multitudes of people at *Antioch* flocking to the Temples, and doing sacrifice to the gods, came to them, and began very severely to reprove and reproach them; for which being apprehended, after many strange and cruel usages he was put to death, with all imaginable pain and torture. Thus *Apphianus* a young man, when the Cryers by proclamation summoned all the Inhabitants of *Cæsaria* to sacrifice to the gods, the *Tribunes* particularly

*Eusebi. de  
mart. Pal.  
c. 2. p. 320.*

Part I. reciting every mans name out of a Book, to the great terrour of all that were Christians, privately and unknown to us (says *Eusebius*, who lived at that time in the same house with him) stole out, and getting near *Urbanus* the *President* (who was then compassed about with a *Guard* of Souldiers) just as he was about to offer Sacrifice, caught hold of his right hand, which he grasped so fast, that he forced him to let fall the Sacrifice, gravely admonishing him to desist from such errors and vanities: *Clearly shewing* (says the *Historian*) that true Christians are so far from being drawn from the Worship of the true God, that by threatnings and torments they are rather heightened into a greater and more ingenuous freedom and boldness in the profession of the Truth. For this fact the young man was almost torn in pieces by the Souldiers, whose rage and fierceness could scarce suffer him to be repriev'd for acuter tortures, which were exeris'd towards him with all possible cruelty; and when all could do no good upon him, he was thrown half dead into the Sea. The like we read of three famous Christians at *Merum* a City in *Phrygia*, where when the Governour

*Socrat. H.*  
*Eccles. l. 3.*  
*c. 15. p.*  
*186.*

vernour of the Province under *Julian* the Part I. *Apostate* had commanded the Heathen Temple to be opened, they got by night into the Temple, and broke to pieces all the *Statues* and *Images* of the gods. Whereupon when a general persecution was like to arise against all the Christians of the City, that the ignorant and innocent might not suffer, the Authors of the fact came of their own accord to the Judge, and confessed it; who offered them pardon if they would sacrifice, which they rejected with disdain, and told him they were much readier to endure any torments and death it self, than to be defiled with sacrificing: and accordingly were first treated with all sorts of torments, and then burnt upon an *Iron Grate*; retaining their courage to the last, and took their leave of the Governour with this *sarcastm*, *If thou hast a mind, Amachius, to eat rost meat, turn us on the other side, lest we be but halfrosted, and so prove ungrateful to thy taste.* So mightily did a restless passion for the divine honour possess the minds of those primitive Christians. And though 'tis true such transports of zeal are not ordinarily warrantable (for which reason the Council of *Illiberis* justly pro-

Part I. hibited those who were killed in the defacing and demolishing Idols, to be reckoned in the number of *Martyrs*) yet do they sufficiently shew what a spirit of eagerness and activity ruled in those times against the false Religions of the world.

By all this we may see how unjustly the Christians were traduced and accused for *Idolaters*; three things were commonly charged upon them, that they worshipped the *Sun*, the *Cross*, and an *Asses head*. For the first, their worshipping the *Sun*, *Tertullian* answers, that the mistake arose from a double cause, partly that the Christians of those times did generally pray towards the *East* and the *Sun-rising*, which the Heathens themselves also did, though upon different grounds: and partly because they performed the Solemnities of their Religion upon the day that was dedicated to the *Sun*, which made the Gentiles suspect that they worshipped the *Sun* it self. They were next charged with worshipping *Crosses*; a charge directly false; as for *Crosses* (says *Octavius*) we neither desire, nor worship them, 'tis you who consecrate wooden gods, that perhaps adore wooden *Crosses* as parts of them; for what else are

*Apol. c. 16.*  
p. 16.

*Minu. Fel.*  
p. 24.

your

your *Ensigns, Banners, and Colours*, with Part I. which you go out to war, but *golden* and *painted Crosses*; the very *Trophies* of your Victory do not only resemble the fashion of a simple Cross, but of a man that's fastned to it; the very same answer which *Tertullian* also returns to this Charge. The occasion of it no doubt was, the Christians talking of, and magnifying so much their *crucified Master*, and their almost constant use of the *sign* of the *Cross*, which (as we shall see afterwards) they made use of even in the most common actions of their lives; but for paying any adoration to a *material Cross*, was a thing to which those times were the greatest strangers; otherwise understanding the Cross for him that hung upon it, they were not ashamed with the great Apostle, to glory in the *Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and to count it the matter of their highest joy and triumph. But the absurdest part of the Charge was, that they worshipped the *head of an Ass*. I hear (says the Heathen in *Minucius Felix*) that being seduced by I know not what fond persuasion they worship the *consecrated head of an Ass*, one of the filthiest Creatures; a Religion fitly calculated for

*Loc. supra citat.*

pag. 8;

I 4

persons

**Part 1.** persons of such a *dull* and *stupid* disposition. Hence *Tertullian* tells us, that *Ibid.* Christians were called. *Asnarii*, Ass-worshippers, and that *Christ* was painted, and publicly exposed by the bold, wicked hand of an apostate Jew, with *Asses ears*, one of his feet *hoof'd*, holding a *Book* in his hand, and having a *Gown* over him, with this Inscription

DEVS CHRISTIANORVM  
ONONYCHITES

Onony-  
chites.]

De variis  
hujus vocis  
lectionib.  
vid. Ri-  
galt. in loc.  
Voss. de  
idol. l. 3. c.  
75. p. 565.  
Pag. 23.

*The Asse-hoof'd God of the Christians.* A most ridiculous representation, and the issue of the most foolish spite and malice: when I saw it (says he) I laughed both at the title and the fashion. This *Octavius* tells his Adversary was the result and spawn of lying fame, begot and nourished by the Father of lyes: for who (says he) can be so silly as to worship this? or who can be so much more silly as to believe that it should be worshipped? unless it be that you yourselves do consecrate whole Asses in the Stable with your Goddesses *Epona*, and religiously adorn them in the Solemnities of *Issa*, and both sacrifice and adore the heads of Rams and Oxen: you make gods of a mixture of a *Goat* and a *Man*, and dedicate them with the faces of

Dogs

*Dogs* and *Lions*. More he has there to Part 1. the same purpose, as *Tertullian* also had answered the same thing before him. The true ground of this ridiculous Charge, as *Tertullian* observes, was a fabulous report that had been a long time common amongst the Heathens, *vid. etiam ad Nation. l. 1. c. 11.* that the *Jews* when wandering in the wilderness, and almost ready to die of thirst, were conducted by wild Asses to a Fountain of water, for which great kindness they formed the shape of an Ass, and ever after worshipped it with divine honours. This is confidently reported both by *Tacitus* and *Plutarch*, as *Tacit. Hist. l. 5. c. 4.* it had been many years before by *Appio* *Plut. Sym. p. 1. lib. 4.* the *Alexandrian* in his Books against the *Jews*, and by this means the Heathens, *Quest. 5. p. 670.* who did frequently confound the *Jews* and *Christians*, came to form and fasten this Charge upon them; when it was equally false in respect of both: for as *Tertullian* observes, the same *Tacitus* who reports this, tells us in another place, *Apol. c. 16.* that when *Pompey* at the taking of *Jerusalem* presumptuously broke into the *Holy of Holies*; whither none but the *High-Priest* might enter, out of a curiosity to pry into the most hidden secrets and *arcana's* of their Religion, he found no

Image

Part 1. Image at all there; whereas (says Tertullian) had they worshipped any such thing, there had been no likelier place to have met with it, and therefore brands him with the charge of *the most lying Historian in the world*. And thus we see how the ancient Christians manifested and maintained their love and piety towards God, by a most vigorous and hearty opposition of that Idolatry that reigned so uncontrollably in the Heathen world.

## CHAP. VI.

### Of Churches, and places of Public Worship in the primitive times.

*Place a circumstance necessary to every action. The piety of Christians in founding places for the Solemnities of Religion. They had distinct and separate places for their Publick Assemblies, even in the Apostles times. Prov'd out of the New Testament, as also in the succeeding Ages, from the testimonies of the Fathers, and Heathen Writers. The common objection of*

*of the Gentiles, that Christians had no Part 1. Temples, considered and answered. Churches encreased as Christianity met with favourable entertainment: restored and repaired by Dioclesian, Maximinus, Constantine. The fashion of their Churches oblong; built towards the East: The form of their Churches described. The Vestibulum or Porch: the Narthex, and what in it. The Nave or body of the Church; the Ambo or Reading-Pew, the station of the faithful. The isle or Chancel; the Altarium or Lords Table. The Bishops Throne and Seats of the Presbyters. The Diaconicon, what: the Prothesis. Christians then beautified their Churches. Whether they had Altars in them. Decent Tables for the celebration of the divine offices; those frequently by the Fathers stiled Altars, and in what sense. They had no such gaudy Altars as the Heathens had in their Temples, and the Papiſts now in their Churches. Altars when begun to be fixed and made of Stone. Made Asylum's and places of refuge, and invested with many privileges by Christian Emperours. No Images in their Churches for above four hundred years, prov'd out of the Fathers. Pictures in Churches*



## Part I.

*Churches condemned by the Council of Illiberis. An account of Epiphanius his tearing the Picture of Christ in the Church of Anablatha; and the great force of the argument thence against Image-Worship. Christian Churches when first formally consecrated: the Encenia of the ancient Church. Our Wakes or Feasts in memory of the dedication of particular Churches. What Incomes or Revenues they had in the first Ages. Particular Churches had some standing Revenues even under the Heathen Emperours. These much increased by the piety of Constantine and the first Christian Princes, their Laws noted to that purpose. The reverence shewed at their going into Churches, and during their stay there, even by the Emperours themselves.*

THE Primitive Christians were not more heartily zealous against the idolatrous Worship of the Heathen-gods, than they were religiously observant of whatever concerned the honour and Worship of the true, as to all the material parts and circumstances of it; as will easily appear, if we consider what care they had about the *place, time, persons,*

*persons,* and both the *matter and manner* Part I. of that Worship that they performed to God, under each of which we shall take notice of what is most considerable, and does most properly relate to it, so far as the Records of those times give us an account of it.

Place is an inseparable circumstance of Religious Worship; for every body by the natural necessity of its being requires some determinate place either for rest or motion: now the Worship of God being in a great part an external action, especially when performed by the joint concurrence of several persons, does not only necessarily require a *place*, but a *place conveniently capacious* of all that join together in the same publick actions of Religion. This reason put all Nations even by the light of Nature upon erecting *publick places* for the honour of their gods, and for their own convenience in meeting together to pay their religious services and devotions. But my present enquiry reaches no farther than the *Primitive Christians*, not whether they met together for the discharge of their common duties; (which I suppose none can doubt of) but whether they had *Churches*, fixed and appropriate

Part I. ate places for the joint performance of their publick offices. And that they had even in those early times, will I think be beyond all dispute, if we take but a short survey of those first Ages of Christianity: in the sacred Story we find some more than probable footsteps of some determinate places for their solemn conventions, and peculiar only to that use. Of this nature was that *εσπερινον* or

AB. 1. 13. Upper Room into which the Apostles and Disciples, after their return from the ascension of our Saviour, went up, as into a place commonly known and separate to that use, there by fasting and prayer to make choice of a new Apostle; and this supposed by a very ancient tradition to have been the *same room* wherein our Saviour the night before his death celebrated the Passover with his Disciples, and instituted the *Lords Supper*. Such a one, if not (which I rather think) the same, was that *one place*, wherein they were all assembled with one accord upon the day of *Pentecost*, when the Holy Ghost visibly came down upon them; and this the rather because the multitude (and they too *strangers of every Nation under heaven*) came so readily to the place upon the first rumour of

of so strange an accident, which could hardly have been, had it not been commonly known to be the place where the Christians used to meet together: and this very learned men take to be the meaning of that *Act. 2. 46. they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread καὶ ἄρον*, not as we render it, *from house to house, but at home*, as 'tis in the margin, or *in the house, they ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart*, i. e. when they had performed their daily devotions at the Temple at the accustomed hours of prayer, they used to return home to this Upper Room, there to celebrate the holy Eucharist, and then go to their ordinary meals: this seems to be a clear and unforc'd interpretation; and to me the more probable, because it immediately follows upon their assembling together in that one place at the day of *Pentecost*, which Room is also called by the same name of *house*, at the *second Verse* of that Chapter; and 'tis no ways unlikely (as M. Mede conjectures) but that when the first Believers sold their Houses and Lands, and laid the money at the Apostles feet to supply the necessities of the Church, some of them might give their houses (at least some

Part I. some eminent Room in them) for the Church to meet, and perform their sacred duties: which also may be the reason why the Apostles writing to particular Christians, speaks so often of *the Church that was in their house*; which seems clearly to intimate not so much the particular persons of any private Family living together under the same band of Christian discipline, as that in such or such a house (and more especially in this or that room of it) there was the constant and solemn convention of the Christians of that place, for their joynt celebration of divine Worship. And this will be farther cleared by that famous passage of S. Paul, where taxing the *Corinthians*, for their irreverence and abuse of the *Lords Supper*, one greedily eating before another, and some of them to great excess, *What* (says he) *have you not houses to eat and to drink in, or despise ye the Church of God.* Where that by *Church* is not meant the *Assembly* meeting, but the *place* in which they used to assemble, is evident partly from what went before, for *their coming together in the Church, verse 18.* is expounded by *their coming together into one place, verse 20.* plainly arguing that the Apostle meant not the persons

1 Cor. 11.  
22.

persons but the place; partly from the Part I. opposition which he makes between the Church and their own private houses; if they must have such irregular Banquets, they had houses of their own, where 'twas much fitter to do it, and to have their ordinary repast, than in that place which was set apart for the common exercises of Religion, and therefore ought not to be dishonoured by such extravagant and intemperate feastings; for which cause he enjoins them in the *close* of that *Chapter*, that *if any man hunger he should eat at home.* And that this place was always thus understood by the Fathers of old, were no hard matter to make out, as also by most learned men of later times, of which it shall suffice to intimate two of our own, *Nic. Full. miscell. S. l. 2. c. 9.* men of great name and learning, who have done it to great satisfaction. *Mr. Mede. p. 405.*

Thus stood the case during the Apostles times; for the Ages after them we find that the Christians had their fixed and definite places of Worship; especially in the second *Century*, as had we no other evidence, might be made good from the testimony of the Authour of that *Dialogue in Lucian* (if not *Lucian* *Philopatr. tom. 2. p. 1007.* himself, of which I see no great cause

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to

Part 1. to doubt) who lived under the Reign of *Trajan*, and who expressly mentions that *House* or *Room* wherein the Christians were wont to assemble together. And *Clemens* in his famous Epistle to the *Corinthians* assures us, that *Christ* did not only appoint the times *when*, the persons by *whom*, but the places *where* he would be solemnly served and worshipped: And *Justin Martyr* expressly affirms, that upon *Sunday* all Christians whether in Town or Country, used to assemble together in *one place*, which could hardly be done, had not that place been fixed and settled: the same we find afterwards in several places of *Tertullian*, who speaks of their coming into the Church and the House of God, which he elsewhere calls the *House of our Dove*, *i. e.* our innocent and Dove-like Religion, and there describes the very form and fashion of it; and in another place speaking of their going into the water to be baptized, he tells us they were wont first to go into the Church to make their solemn renunciation before the Bishop. About this time in the Reign of *Alexander Severus* the Emperour (who began his Reign about the year 222.) the Heathen Historian tells us, that when

pag. 52.

Ap. 2. p. 98.

De idolola.  
c. 7. p. 88.  
Adv. Valentin. c. 3.  
p. 2. 51.

De Coron.  
Mil. c. 3.  
p. 101.

when there was a contest between the Part 1. Christians and the Vintners about a certain publick place, which the Christians had seiz'd and challenged for theirs, the Emperour gave the cause for the Christians against the Vintners, saying 'twas much better that God should be worshipped there any ways, than that the Vintners should possess it. If it shall be said that the Heathens of those times generally accused the Christians for having no Temples, and charged it upon them as a piece of *atheism and impiety*, and that the Christian Apologists did not deny it, as will appear to any that will take the pains to examine the places alleged in the margin; to this the answer in short depends upon the notion which they had of a *Temple*, by which the Gentiles understood the places devoted to their gods, and wherein their Deities were inclosed and shut up, places adorned with Statues and Images, with fine Altars and ornaments; and for such Temples as these they freely confessed they had none, no nor ought to have, for that the true God did not (as the Heathens supposed theirs) dwell in Temples made with hands, nor either needed nor could possibly be honoured

Lamprid.  
in vit. A.  
lex. Severi  
c. 49. p.  
575.

Min. Fal.  
p. 8. -- 26,  
Arnob. adv.  
gent. l. 6.  
p. 83.  
Lañ. de  
O ig error.  
l. 2. c. 2.  
p. 141.

Part 1, by them : and therefore they purposely abstained from the word *Temple*, and I do not remember that 'tis used by any Christian Writer for the place of the Christian Assemblies, for the best part of the first three hundred years : and yet those very Writers who deny Christians to have had any Temples, do at the same time acknowledge, that they had their meeting places for divine Worship, their *conventicula* as *Arnobius* calls them, and complains they were furiously demolished by their Enemies. If any desire to know more concerning this, as also that Christians had appropriate places of Worship for the greatest part of the three first Centuries, let him read a Discourse purposely written upon this subject, by a *most learned man* of our own Nation, nor indeed should I have said so much as I have about it, but that I had noted most of these things, before I read his Discourse upon that subject.

Afterwards their Churches began to rise apace, according as they met with more quiet and favourable times ; especially under *Valerian*, *Gallienus*, *Claudius*, *Aurelian*, and some other Emperours : of which times *Eusebius* tells us, that the

Lib. 4.  
p. 67.

Mr. Jof.  
Mede dis-  
course con-  
cerning  
Churches  
oper. part.  
I. lib. 2.

Hist. Eccl.  
l. 8. c. 1.  
p. 292.

the *Bishops* met with the highest respect Part 1.  
and kindness both from people and Go-  
vernours ; and adds, but who shall be  
able to reckon up the innumerable mul-  
titudes that daily flocked to the Faith of  
*Christ*, the number of Congregations in  
every *City*, those famous meetings of theirs  
in their *Oratories* or sacred places, so great,  
that not being content with those old  
Buildings which they had before, they  
erected from the very foundations more  
fair and spacious Churches in every Ci-  
ty. This was several years before the  
times of *Constantine*, and yet even then  
they had their Churches of *ancient date*.  
This indeed was a very serene and Sun-  
shiny season, but alas it begun to dark-  
en again, and *the clouds returned after*  
*rain* ; for in the very next Chapter he  
tells us that in the Reign of *Dioclesian*,  
there came out Imperial Edicts, com-  
manding all Christians to be persecuted,  
the Bishops to be imprisoned, the holy  
Bible to be burnt, and their Churches  
to be demolished and laid level with the  
ground : which how many they were,  
may be guessed at by this, that (as *Op-  
tatus* tells us) there were about this time  
above forty *Basilica* or Churches in  
*Rome* only. Upon *Constantines* coming  
into

De Schif-  
mat. Donat.  
l. 2. p. 40.

Part I. into a partnership of the Empire, the Clouds began to disperse and scatter; and *Maximian* (who then govern'd the *Eastern* parts of the Empire) a bitter Enemy to Christians, was yet forced by a publick Edict to give Christians the free liberty of their Religion, and leave to repair and rebuild τα κτεκνὰ τὰ ὀνόμῃ, their Churches; which shortly after they every where set upon, raising their Churches from the ground to a vast height, and to a far greater splendour and glory than those which they had before, the Emperours giving all possible encouragement to it by frequent Laws and Constitutions: the Christians also themselves contributing towards it with the greatest cheerfulness and liberality, even to a magnificence; comparable to that of the *Jewish* Princes towards the building of *Solomons Temple*, as *Eusebius* tells them in his *Oration* at the dedication of the famous Church at *Tyre*. And no sooner was the whole Empire devolved upon *Constantine*, but he published two Laws, one to prohibit *Pagan Worship*, the other commanding Churches to be built of a nobler size and capacity than before; to which purpose he directed his Letters to *Eusebius* and the

*Euseb. l. 9. c. 10. p. 364.*

*Id lib. 10. c. 2. p. 370.*

*ib c. 4. p. 377.*

*Devot. Constant. l. 2. c. 45, 46. p. 444.*

the rest of the Bishops to see it done Part I. within their several jurisdictions, charging also the Governours of Provinces to be assisting to them, and to furnish them with whatever was necessary and convenient: insomuch that in a short time the world was beautified with Churches and sacred Oratories, both in Cities and Villages, and in the most barbarous and desert places, called κτεκνὰ, says the *Historian* (from whence our *Kirk* and *Church*) the *Lords Houses*, because erected not to men, but to the honour of our *Lord* and *Saviour*. 'Twere needless to insist any longer upon the piety of Christians in building Churches in and after the times of *Constantine*, the instances being so vastly numerous; only I cannot omit what *Nazianzen* reports of his own Father, who though Bishop of a very small and inconsiderable Diocess, yet built a famous Church almost wholly at his own charge.

*Orat. de laud. Const. c. 7. p. 660.*

*Or. funebr. in laud Patr. Or. 19. p. 313.*

Thus we have seen that from the very infancy of the Gospel, the Christians always had their settled and determinate places of divine Worship; for the form and fashion of their Churches it was for the most part oblong, to keep (say some) the better correspondence with

*Constit. A. post. l. 2. c. 57. p. 875.*

Part 1. with the fashion of a *ship*, the common notion and metaphor by which the Church was wont to be represented, and to put us in mind that we are tossed up and down in the world, as upon a stormy and tempestuous *sea*, and that out of the Church there's no safe passage to Heaven, the Country we all hope to arrive at. They were generally built towards the *East* (towards which also they performed the more solemn parts of their Worship, the reasons whereof we shall see afterwards in its due place) following herein the Custom of the Gentiles, though upon far other grounds than they did, and this seems to have obtained from the first Ages of Christianity; sure I am 'twas so in *Tertullian's* time, who opposing the plain and simple way of the *Orthodox* Assemblies to the *skulking and clancular* Conventicles of the Hereticks, who *serpent-like* crept about in holes and corners; says he, *the house of our Dove-like Religion is simple, built on high and in open view, and respects the light as the figure of the Holy Spirit, and the East as the representation of Christ*. It cannot be thought that in the first Ages, while the flames of persecution raged about their ears, the Christian

Adv. Valentini. p. 251.

Part 1. Christian Churches should be very stately and magnificent; but such as the condition of those times would bear, their splendour encreasing according to the entertainment that Christianity met withal in the world, till the Empire becoming Christian, their Temples rose up into *grandeur* and *gallantry*, as amongst others may appear by the particular description which *Eusebius* makes of the Church at *Tyre*, mentioned before, and that which *Constantine* built at *Constantinople* in honour of the Apostles, both which were incomparably sumptuous and magnificent.

De vit. Const. l. 4. c. 58, 59. p. 555.

I shall not undertake to describe at large the exact form, and the several parts and dimensions of their Churches (which varied somewhat according to different times and Ages) but briefly reflect upon such as were most common and remarkable: at the entrance of their Churches (especially after they began to arrive at more perfection) was the *Vestibulum* (called also *Atrium* and *μεσάριον*) the *Porch*, in greater Churches of somewhat larger capacity, adorned many times with goodly *Cloysters*, marble Columns, Fountains, and Cisterns of water, and covered over for the conveniency of those

Part 1. those that stood or walked there. Here stood the lowest order of *Penitents*, beginning the prayers of the faithful as they went in. For the Church it self, it usually consisted of three parts; the first was the *Narthex* (which we have no proper word to render by) it was that part of the Church that lay next to the great door by which they entred in: in the first part of it stood the *Catechumens*, or first learners of Christianity, in the middle the *Exorcizementi*, or those who were possessed by *Satan*, and in this part also stood the *Font*, or place of baptismal initiation; and towards the upper end was the place of the *Hearers*, who were one of the ranks of *Penitents*. The second part contained the middle, or main body of the Church (called by the *Greeks* *NAOS*, by the *Latins* *Navis*, from whence our term the *Nave* of the Church comes) where the faithful assembled for the celebration of Divine Service, where the men and the women had their distinct apartments, lest at such times unchast and irregular appetites should be kindled by a promiscuous interfering with one another; of which pious and excellent contrivance mention is made in an ancient Funeral Inscription found in the Vatican Cemetery

Const. A.  
post 12 c.  
57. p. 875.

Roma sub-  
terranean l. 2.  
c. 10. Num.  
23. p. 204.

Cemetery

Cemetery at Rome; such a one buried, Part 1, SINISTRA PARTE VIRORUM, on that side of the Church where the men sat. In this part of the Church next to the entring into it stood the Class of the *Penitents*, who were called *συνκλισητες*, because at their going out they fell down upon their knees before the Bishop, who laid his hands upon them. Next to them was the *Ambo*, the *Pulpit* or rather *reading-desk*, whence the Scriptures were read and preached to the people. Above that were the *Faithful*, the highest rank and order of the people, and who alone communicated at the Lords Table. The third part was the *Bima*, or *ισελειον*, separated from the rest of the Church by neat *Rails*, called *Cancelli*, whence our *English* word *Chancel*, to denote the part of the Church to this day: into this part none might come but such as were in holy orders, unless it were the *Greek Emperours*, who were allowed to come up to the Table to make their *Offerings*, and so back again; within this division the most considerable thing was the *Θυσιαστηριον*, the *Altar* (as they metaphorically called it, because there they offered the commemorative Sacrifice of Christs Body and Blood) or



Part I. of the *Communion-Table* (*ἡ Ἀγία ἑσθία* as 'tis frequently styled by the *Greek Fathers*) behind which at the very upper end of the Chancel was the *Chair* or *Throne* of the Bishop (for so was it almost constantly called) on both sides whereof were the *cathedrae*, the *Seats* of the *Presbyters* (for the *Deacons* might not here sit down:) the Bishops Throne was raised up somewhat higher from the ground; and from hence I suppose it was that he usually delivered his Sermons to the people: therefore *Socrates* seems to note it as a new thing in *Chrysostom*, that when he preached, he went to sit *ἐν καθέδρῳ* upon the *Pulpit* (he means that in the body of the Church, for so *Sozomon* tells us that he sat in the *Reading Desk* in the middle of the Church) that by reason of his low voice he might be better heard of the people. Adjoining to the Chancel on the *North-side*, probably, was the *Diaconicon*, mentioned both in the *Laodicean Council* (though I know both *Zonaras* and *Balsamon*, and after them the learned *Bea Allatus* will have another thing to be meant in that place) as also in a Law of *Arcadius* and *Honorius* against *Hereticks*; and probably so called either because

Hist. Eccl.  
l. 6. c. 5.  
p. 304.

Lib. 8. c. 5.  
p. 764.

Can. 21.  
De Templ.  
Grac. Num.  
14. p. 25.  
C. Ib. Lib.  
16. Tit. 4.  
l. 29. ubi  
vid. Jac.  
Gothofr.  
Com.

because peculiarly committed to the *Deacon* of the place, or as the great Commentator upon that Law will have it, because set apart *τῇ ἱερῇ διακονίᾳ* to some sacred services. It was in the nature of our modern *Vestries*, the *Sacristy*, wherein the Plate, Vessels, and Vestments belonging to the Church, and other things dedicated to holy uses, were laid up, and where in after times *Reliques* and such like Fopperies were treasured up with great care and diligence. On the other side of the Chancel was the *Prothessis*, or place where things were prepared in order to the Sacrament, where the Offerings were laid, and what remained of the Sacramental Elements, till they were decently disposed of. And this may serve for a short view of the Churches of those first times, after they began to grow up into some beauty and perfection.

But though the Christians of those times spared no convenient cost in founding and adorning publick places for the Worship of God, yet were they careful to keep a decent mean between a sordid slovenliness, and a too curious and over nice superstition. In the more early times, even while the fury and fierceness

Part 1. fierceness of their Enemies kept them low and mean, yet they *beautified* their Oratories and places of Worship; especially if we may believe the *Author* of the Dialogue in *Lucian* (whom we mentioned before, and who lived within the first Age) who bringing in one *Critias* that was persuaded by the Christians, to go to the place of their Assembly (which by his description seems to have been an *inagion*, or *Upper-Room*) tells us that after they had gone up several stairs, they came at last into an *Honse* or *Room* that was overlaid with Gold, where he beheld nothing but a company of persons with their bodies bow'd down, and pale faces. I know the design of that Dialogue in part is to abuse and deride the Christians, but there's no reason to suppose he feigned those circumstances which made nothing to his purpose. As the times grew better, they added more and greater ornaments to them; concerning two whereof there has been some contest in the Christian world, *Altars* and *Images*. As for *Altars*, the first Christians had no other in their Churches than *decent Tables* of wood, upon which they celebrated the holy *Eucharist*; these 'tis true in allusion

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to those in the *Jewish Temple*, the Fathers generally called *Altars*, and truly enough might do so, by reason of those *sacrifices* they offered upon them, viz. the commemoration of *Christs Sacrifice* in the blessed Sacrament, the Sacrifice of *prayer and thanksgiving*, and the oblation of *Alms and Charity* for the poor (usually laid upon those *Tables*) which the Apostle expressly styles a *Sacrifice*. These were the only *sacrifices* (for no other had the Christian world for many hundreds of years) which they then offered upon their *Altars*, which were much of the same kind with our *Communion-Tables* at this day. For that they had not any such *fixed and gaudy Altars* (as the *Heathens* then had in their *Temples*, and *Papists* still have in their *Churches*) is most evident, because the Heathens at every turn did charge and reproach them for having none, and the Fathers in their answers did freely and openly acknowledge and avow it; asserting and pleading that the only true *sacred Altar* was a pure and a holy mind, and that the *best* and most *acceptable Sacrifice* to God was a pious heart, and an innocent and religious life. *Hæc nostra sacrificia, hæc Dei sacra sunt, these* (say they)

Vid. Clem.  
Alex. Strom.  
mat. l. 7.  
p. 117.  
Orig. adv.  
Cels. lib. 4.  
p. lib. 8.  
p. 383.  
M. Fallu.  
p. 8...26.  
Arnob. adv.  
gent. l. 6.  
p. 83.  
Lactant.  
l. 2. c. 2.

Part I. they) are our oblations, these the sacrifices we give to God. This was the state of Altars in the Christian Churches for near upon the first three hundred years; till *Constantine* coming in, and with him peace and plenty, the Churches began to excel in costliness and bravery every day, and then their wooden and moveable Altars began to be turned into fixed Altars of *Stone* or *Marble*, though used to no other purpose than before, and yet this too did not so universally obtain (though severely urged by *Sylvester* Bishop of *Rome*) but that in very many places Tables or moveable Altars of wood continued in use a long time after, as might easily be made appear from several passages in *Athanasius* and others, yea even to *S. Augustine's* time, and probably much later, were it proper to my business to search after it. No sooner were Altars made fixed and immoveable, but they were compassed in with *Rails* to fence off rudeness and irreverence, and persons began to regard them with mighty observance and respect; which soon grew so high, that they became *Asylums* and refuges to protect innocent persons and unwitting offenders from immediate violence and oppression;

*Athanas.*  
ad Ortho-  
dox. p. 729.  
Tom. I.  
Et Ep. ad  
Solit. vit.  
agent.  
Aug. Quest.  
V. c. N. T.  
Quest. 101.  
et alibi  
sepe.

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an instance whereof *Nazianzen* gives Part I. us in a Christian Widow a woman of great place and quality, who flying from the importunities of the President, who would have forced her to marry him, had no other way but to take sanctuary at the holy Table in *S. Basil's* Church at *Cæsarea*; she was demanded with many fierce and terrible threatnings, but the holy man stoutly refused, although the President was his mortal Enemy, and sought only a pretence to ruine him. Many such cases may be met with in the History of the Church: nor was this a privilege meerly founded upon custom, but settled and ratified by the Laws of *Christian Emperours*, concerning the particular cases whereof, together with the extent and limitation of these immunities, there are no less than six several Laws of the Emperours *Theodosius*, *Ar-* Lib. 9 Tit. 45. de his  
*cadius*, and *Theodosius junior*, yet ex- qui ad Ec-  
tant in the *Theodosian Code*. But how clesias con-  
far those *Asyls* and *Sanctuaries* were fugiant.  
good and useful, and to what evil and pernicious purposes they were improv'd in after-times, is without the limits of my present task to enquire.

But if in those times there was so little ground for Altars (as us'd in the present

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present

Part I. present sense of the Church of Rome) there was yet far less for Images; and certainly might things be carried by a fair and impartial tryal of Antiquity, the dispute would soon be at an end; there not being any one just and good authority to prove that Images were either worshipped, or us'd in Churches, for near upon four hundred years after Christ; and I doubt not but it might be carried much farther, but that my business lyes mainly within those first Ages of Christianity. Nothing can be more clear than that the Christians were frequently challenged by the Heathens, as for having no Altars and Temples, so that they had no Images or Statues in them, and that the Christian Apologists never denied it, but industriously defended themselves against the charge, and rejected the very thoughts of any such thing with contempt and scorn, as might be abundantly made good from Tertullian, Clem. Alexandrinus, Origen, Minucius Felix, Arnobius and Lactantius, many of whose testimonies have been formerly pointed to. Amongst other things Origen plainly tells his Adversary (who had objected this to the Christians) that the Images that were to be dedicated

dedicated to God were not to be care- Part I.  
ed by the hand of Artists; but to be formed and fashioned in us by the Word of God, viz. the virtues of justice and temperance, of wisdom and piety, &c. that conform us to the Image of his only Son: These (says he) are the only Statues formed in our minds, and by which alone we are perswaded, 'tis fit to do honour to him who is the Image of the invisible God, the prototype and architypal pattern of all such Images. Had Christians then given adoration to them, or but set them up in their places of Worship, with what face can we suppose they should have told the world, that they so much slighted and abhorred them; and indeed what a hearty detestation they universally shew'd to any thing that had but the least shadow of Idolatry, has been before prov'd at large. The Council of Illiberis that was held in Spain some time before Constantine expressly provided against it, decreeing that no Pictures ought to be in the Church, nor that any thing that is worshipped and adored should be painted upon the walls: words so clear and positive, as not to be evaded by all the little shifts and glosses which the Expositors

Can. 3d.  
p. 50.

Part I. of that *Canon* would put upon it. The first use of Statues and Pictures in public Churches was merely *historical*, or to add some beauty and ornament to the place, which after Ages improved into Superstition and Idolatry. The first that we meet with upon good authority (for all the instances brought for the first Ages are either false and spurious, or impertinent and to no purpose) is no elder than the times of *Epiphanius*, and then too met with no very welcome entertainment, as may appear from *Epiphanius* his own Epistle translated by *S. Hierom*; where the story in short is this. Coming (*says he*) to *Anablatha* a Village in *Palestine*, and going into a Church to pray, I espied a *Curtain* hanging over the door, whereon was painted the *Image of Christ* or of some *Saint*; which when I looked upon, and saw the Image of a man hanging up in the Church, *contrary to the authority of the Holy Scriptures*, I presently rent it, and advis'd the Guardians of the Church rather to make use of it as a Winding-sheet for some poor mans burying: whereat when they were a little troubled, and said 'twas but just, that since I had rent that *Curtain*, I should change it, and give them another;

Inter opera  
Hieron.  
tom. 2.  
p. 161.

another; I promis'd them I would, and Part I. have now sent the best I could get, and pray' entreat them to accept it, and give command that for the time to come no such Curtains, being *contrary to our Religion*, may be hung up in the Church of *Christ*; it more becoming your place solicitously to remove whatever is offensive to, and unworthy of the Church of *Christ*, and the people committed to your Charge. This was written to *John Bishop of Jerusalem*, in whose *Diocese* the thing had been done; and the case is so much the more pressing and weighty, by how the greater esteem and value *Epiphanius* (then Bishop of *Salamine* in *Cyprus*) for his great age and excellent learning, had in the Church of God. This instance is so home and pregnant, that the Patrons of *Image-Worship* are at a mighty loss what to say to it, and after all are forced to cry out against it as *suppositious*. *Bellarmino* brings no less than nine arguments (if such they may be called) to make it seem probable: but had he been ingenuous, he might have given one reason more true and satisfactory than all the rest, why that part of the Epistle should be thought forged and spurious, viz. *be- cause*

De Eccles.  
Triumph.  
l. 2. c. 9.  
col. 776.

Part 1. *cause it makes so much against them.* More might be produced to this purpose, but by this I hope 'tis clear enough, that the honest Christians of those times, as they thought it sufficient to pray to God without making their addresses to *Saints and Angels*, so they accounted their Churches fine enough without *Pictures and Images* to adorn them.

Their Churches being built and beautified (so far as consisted with the ability and simplicity of those days) they sought to derive a greater value and esteem upon them by some peculiar *consecration*; for the wisdom and piety of those times thought it not enough barely to devote them to the publick services of Religion, unless they also set them apart with solemn Rites of a formal *dedication*. This had been an ancient Custom both amongst *Jews and Gentiles*, as old as *Solomons Temple*, nay as *Moses and the Tabernacle*. When 'twas first taken up by Christians is not easie to determine; only I do not remember to have met with the footsteps of any such thing in any approved Writer (for the *Decretal Epistles* every one knows what their faith is) till the Reign of *Constantine*:

*stantine*: in his time Christianity being Part 1.  
become more prosperous and successful, Churches were every where erected and repaired, and no sooner were so, but (as *Eusebius* tells us) they were solemnly consecrated, and the dedications celebrated with great festivity and rejoicing; an instance whereof he there gives of the famous Church of *Tyre*, at the dedication whereof he himself made that excellent *Oration* inserted into the body of his History. About the thirtieth year of his Reign he built a stately Church at *Jerusalem* over the *Sepulchre* of our *Saviour*, which was dedicated with singular magnificence and veneration, and for the greater honour, by his imperial Letters he summoned the Bishops, who from all parts of the *East* were then met in Council at *Tyre*, to be present and assisting at the Solemnity. The Rites and Ceremonies used at these dedications, as we find in *Eusebius*, were a great confluence of Bishops and Strangers from all parts, the performance of divine offices, singing of hymns and Psalms, reading and expounding of the Scriptures, Sermons and Orations, receiving the holy Sacrament, prayers, and thanksgivings, liberal Alms bestowed on the poor, and great

*Hist. Eccl.*  
l. 10. c. 3.  
p. 370.

*Devot. Con-*  
*stant. l. 4.*  
c. 42, 43.

**Part I.** great gifts given to the Church, and in short, mighty expressions of mutual love and kindness, and universal rejoycing with one another. What other particular Ceremonies were introduced afterwards, concerns not me to enquire, only let me note, that under some of the Christian Emperours, when *Paganism* lay gasping for life, and their Temples were purged and converted into Christian Churches, they were usually consecrated only by placing a *Cross* in them, as the venerable Ensign of the Christian Religion, as appears by the Law of *Theodosius* the younger to that purpose. The memory of the dedication of that Church at *Jerusalem* was constantly continued and kept alive in that Church, and once a year, to wit, on the 14. of *September*, on which day it had been dedicated, was solemnized with great pomp and much confluence of people from all parts, the Solemnity usually lasting eight days together, which doubtless gave birth to that custom of keeping *anniversary days* of commemoration of the dedication of Churches, which from this time forwards we frequently meet with in the Histories of the Church, and much prevailed in after Ages, some shadow whereof

still

still remains amongst us at this day, in *Part I.* the *Wakes* observed in several Counties, which in correspondence with the *Encenia* of the ancient Church, are annual Festivals kept in Country Villages, in memory of the dedication of their particular Churches.

And because it was a custom in some Ages of the Church, that no Church should be consecrated till it was endowed, it may give us occasion to enquire what *Revenues* Churches had in those first Ages of Christianity. 'Tis more than probable that for a great while they had no other publick incomes, than either what arose out of those common contributions which they made at their usual Assemblies, every one giving or offering according to his ability or devotion, which was put into a common stock or treasury, or what proceeded from the offerings which they made out of the improvement of their Lands, the *Apostolick Canons* providing that their First-fruits should be partly offered at the Church, partly sent home to the *Bishops* and *Presbyters*: the care of all which was committed to the *President* or *Bishop* of the Church, (for who says the Authour of the fore-cited *Canons*, is fitter to be trusted

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*Eccl. Theod. lib. 16. Tit. 10. de pag. sacrific. & templis. leg. 25. ubi vid. Com. Gubhoff.*

*Niceph. Call. Hist. Eccl. l. 8. c. 50. p. 653.*

*Can. 3, 4.*

*Can. 48.*

Part I. ed with the *riches and revenues* of the Church, than he who is intrusted with the *precious souls* of men) and by him disposed of for the maintenance of the *Clergie*, the relief of the poor, or whatever necessities of the Church. As Christianity encreased, and times grew better, they obtained more proper and fixed revenues, houses and lands being settled upon them; for such 'tis certain they had even during the times of persecution; for so we find in a Law of *Constantine* and *Licinius*, where giving liberty of Religion to Christians, and restoring them freely to the Churches which had been taken from them, and disposed of by former Emperours; they further add; and because (*say they*) the same Christians had not only places wherein they were wont to assemble, but are also known to have had other possessions, which were not the propriety of any single person, but belonged to the *whole body and community*; all these by this Law we command to be immediately restored to those Christians, to every Society and Community of them what belonged to them. And in a rescript to *Anulinus* the *Proconsul* about the same matter, they particularly specify, whether

*Euseb. l. 10. c. 5. p. 389.*

*Ib. p. 390.*

Part II. whether they be *Gardens* or *Houses*, or whatever else belonged to the right and propriety of those Churches, that with all speed they be universally restored to them; the same which *Maximinus* also (though no good friend to Christians, yet either out of fear of *Constantine*, or from the conviction of his conscience awakened by a terrible sickness) had ordained for his parts of the Empire. Afterwards *Constantine* set himself by all ways to advance the honour and interests of the Church; out of the Tributes of every City which were yearly paid into his *Exchequer*, he assigned a portion to the Church and Clergy of that place, and settled it by a Law, which (excepting the short Reign of *Julian* who revoked it) was as the Historian assures us, in force in his time. Where any of the Martyrs or Confessors had died without kindred, or been banished their native Country, and left no heirs behind them, he ordained that their Estates and Inheritance should be given to the Church of that place, and that whoever had seized upon them, or had bought them of the *Exchequer* should restore them, and refer themselves to him for what recompence should be made them.

*Lib. 9. c. 36.*

*Sozom. Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. c. 8. p. 411.*

*Ib. lib. 5. c. 5. p. 600.*

*Euseb. de vit. Const. l. 2. c. 36. & seq.*



Part I. them. He took away the restraint which former Emperours had laid upon the bounty of pious and charitable men, and gave every man liberty to leave what he would to the Church: he gave salaries out of the publick Corn, which though taken away by *Julian*, was restored by his Successor *Jovianus*, and ratified as a perpetual donation by the Law of *Valentinian* and *Marcianus*. After his time the Revenues of Churches encreased every day, pious and devout persons thinking they could never enough testify their piety to God, by expressing their bounty and liberality to the Church.

I shall conclude this discourse, by observing what *respect and reverence* they were wont in those days to shew in the Church, as the solemn place of Worship, and where God did more peculiarly manifest his presence: and this certainly was very great. They came into the Church, as into the *Palace* of the great King (as *Chrysostom* calls it) with fear and trembling, upon which account he there presses the highest modesty and gravity upon them: before their going into the Church they used to wash at least their hands, as *Tertullian* probably intimates,

Cod. l. i.  
Tit. 2. de  
S. S. Eccl.  
leg. 1.

Ibid. leg.  
12.

Ep. ad Hebr.  
in c. 9.  
hom. 15.  
rom. 10.  
p. 1862.

Tert. de O.  
rat. c. 11.  
p. 133.

intimates, and *Chrysostom* expressly tells us; carrying themselves while there with the most profound silence and devotion; nay so great was the reverence which they bore to the Church, that the *Emperours* themselves who otherwise never went without their Guard about them, yet when they came to go into the Church used to lay down their *Arms*, to leave their *Guard* behind them, and to put off their *Crowns*, reckoning that the less ostentation they made of power and greatness there, the more firmly the imperial Majesty would be entailed upon them, as we find it in the Law of *Theodosius* and *Valentinian*, inserted at large into the last edition of the *Theodosian Code*. But of this we may probably speak more, when we come to treat of the manner of their publick adoration.

Part I.  
Chrysost.  
hom. 52. in  
Math. p.  
462. hom.  
in Joan. 72.  
p. 371.

Lib. 9. Tit.  
45. leg. 4.  
vid. Chry-  
sost. Orat.  
post redit.  
ab exil.  
Tom. 4.  
p. 850.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Lords-Day and the Fasts  
and Festivals of the ancient  
Church.

*Time as necessary to religious actions as Place. Fixed times of Publick Worship observed by all Nations. The Lords Day chiefly observed by Christians: Stiled Sunday, and why. Peculiarly consecrated to the memory of Christs Resurrection. All kneeling at prayer on this day forbidden, and why. Their publick Assemblies constantly held upon this day. Forced to assemble before day in times of persecution; thence jeered by the Heathens as Latebroſa & Lucifugax Natio. The Lords day ever kept as a day of rejoycing; all fasting upon it forbidden. The great care of Constantine, and the first Christian Emperours, for the honour and observance of this Day. Their Laws to that purpose. Their constant and conscientious attendance upon publick Worship on the Lords Day. Canons of ancient Councils about absenting from publick*

Ch. 8. *Primitive Christianity.* 159  
*lick Worship. Sabbath, or Saturday, Part I. kept in the East as a religious day, with all the publick Solemnities of Divine Worship: how it came to be so. Otherwise in the Western Churches, observed by them as a Fast, and why. This not universal. S. Ambrose his practice at Milan; and counsel to S. Augustine in the case. Their solemn Fasts either Weekly or Annual; Weekly on Wednesdays and Fridays, held till three in the Afternoon. Annual Fast that of Lent, how ancient. Upon what account called Quadragesima. Observed with great strictness. The Hebdomada Magna, or the Holy Week, kept with singular austerity, and the reason of it. Festivals observed by the Primitive Christians. That of Easter as ancient as the times of the Apostles. An account of the famous Controversie between the eastern and Western Churches, about the keeping of Easter. The intemperate spirit of Pope Victor. Irenæus his moderate interposal. The case finally determined by the Council of Nice. The Vigils of this Feast observed with great expressions of rejoycing. The bounty of Christian Emperours upon Easter-day. The Feast of Pentecost how ancient. Why stiled*

## Part 1.

*stiled Whitsunday. Dominica in Albis, why so called. The whole space between Easter and Whitsuntide kept Festival. The Acts of the Apostles why publickly read during that time. The Feast of Epiphany anciently what. Christmas-day, the ancient obseruation of it. Epiphany in a strict sense what, and why so called. The Memorizæ Martyrum what. When probably first begun. The great reverence they had for Martyrs. Their passions stiled their Birth-day, and why. These anniversary Solemnities kept at the Tombs of Martyrs. Over these magnificent Churches erected afterwards. What religious exercises performed at those meetings. The first rise of Martyrologies. Oblations for Martyrs, how understood in the ancient Writers of the Church. These Festivals kept with great rejoycing, mutual love and charity; their ouerious or common Feasts. Markets held for that purpose in those places. The ill use which after-times made of these memorials.*

**T**ime is a circumstance no less inseparable from religious actions than Place, for man consisting of a soul and body cannot always be actually engaged

engaged in the service of God, that's the Part 1. privilege of Angels, and souls freed from the fetters of mortality; so long as we are here, we must worship God with respect to our present state, and consequently of necessity have some definite and particular time to do it in. Now that man might not be left to a floating uncertainty in a matter of so great importance, in all Ages and Nations men have been guided by the very dictates of Nature to pitch upon some *certain seasons*, wherein to assemble and meet together to perform the publick offices of Religion. What and how many were the publick *Festivals* instituted and observed either amongst *Jews* or *Gentiles*, I am not concerned to take notice of. For the ancient Christians, they ever had their peculiar seasons, their solemn and stated times of meeting together to perform the common duties of Divine Worship; of which because the **Lords-Day** challenges the precedency of all the rest, we shall begin first with that. And being unconcern'd in all the controversies which in the late times were raised about it; I shall only note some instances of the piety of Christians in reference to this day, which I have ob-

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served

Part 1. served in passing through the Writers of those times. For the name of this day of Publick Worship, it is sometimes, especially by *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, called *Sunday*, because it hapned upon that day of the week, which by the Heathens was dedicated to the *Sun*, and therefore as being best known to them, the Fathers commonly made use of it in their Apologies to the Heathen Governours. This title continued after the world became Christian, and seldom it is that it passes under any other name in the Imperial Edicts of the first Christian Emperours. But the more proper and prevailing name was *Kueen*, or *Dies Dominica*, the *Lords-day*, as 'tis called by *S. John* himself, as being that day of the Week whereon our *Lord* made his triumphant return from the dead; this *Justin Martyr* assures us was the true original of the title; upon *Sunday* (*says he*) we all assemble and meet together, as being the first day wherein God, parting the darkness from the rude chaos, created the world, and the same day whereon *Jesus Christ* our Saviour rose again from the dead; for he was crucified the day before *Saturday*, and the day after (which is *Sunday*) he

Rev. 1. 10.

Ap. 2. p. 99.

Part 1. he appeared to his Apostles and Disciples: by this means observing a *kind* of analogy and proportion with the Jewish Sabbath which had been instituted by God himself. For as that day was kept as a commemoration of Gods *Sabbath*, or resting from the work of Creation, so was this set apart to religious uses, as the solemn memorial of *Christ's* resting from the work of our redemption in this world, compleated upon the day of his resurrection. Which brings into my mind that custom of theirs so universally common in those days, that whereas at other times they *kneeled* at prayers, on the *Lords day* they always prayed *standing*, as is expressly affirmed both by *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian*; the reason of which we find in the *Answer* of the *Questions* and *Answers* in *J. Martyr*: it is (*says he*) that by this means we may be put in mind both of our fall by sin, & our resurrection or restitution by the grace of *Christ*; that for six days we pray upon our knees, is in token of our fall by sin; but that on the *Lords day* we do not bow the knee, does symbolically represent our *resurrection*, by which through the grace of *Christ* we are delivered from our sins, and the powers of death: this he there tells us was a custom

M 2 deriv'd

Ap. 2. p. 98.  
De Coron.  
c. 3. p. 102.  
Resp. ad  
Quest. 115.  
p. 468.

Part 1. deriv'd from the very times of the Apostles, for which he cites *Irenæus* in his Book concerning *Easter*. And this custom was maintained with so much vigour, that when some began to neglect it, the great Council of *Nice* took notice of it, and ordained that there should be a constant *uniformity* in this case, and that on the Lords day (and at such other times as were usual) men should *stand*, when they made their prayers to God. So fit and reasonable did they think it to do all possible honour to that day, on which Christ rose from the dead. Therefore we may observe all along in the sacred story, that after Christs resurrection the Apostles and primitive Christians did especially assemble upon *the first day of the week*: and whatever they might do at other times, yet there are many passages that intimate, that the first day of the week was their more solemn time of meeting; on this day it was that they were met together, when our Saviour first appeared to them, and so again the next week after: on this day they were assembled when the Holy Ghost so visibly came down upon them, when *Peter* preached that excellent Sermon, converted and baptized three thousand souls.

Can. 20.

souls. Thus when *S. Paul* was taking his leave at *Troas*, upon the *first day* of the week, when the Disciples came together to *break Bread*, i. e. as almost all agree, to celebrate the holy Sacrament, he preached to them, sufficiently intimating that upon that day 'twas their usual custom to meet in that manner; and elsewhere giving directions to the Church of *Corinth* (as he had done in the like case to other Churches) concerning their contributions to the poor suffering Brethren, he bids them lay it aside upon the first day of the week, which seems plainly to respect their religious assemblies upon that day, for then it was that every one according to his ability deposited something for the relief of the poor, and the uses of the Church.

1 Cor. 16.  
1, 2.

After the Apostles, the Christians constantly observed this day, meeting together for prayer, expounding and hearing of the Scriptures, celebration of the Sacraments, and other publick duties of Religion. Upon the day called *Sunday* (says *J. Martyr*) all of us that live either in City or Country meet together in one place; and what they then did, he there describes, of which afterwards. This doubtless *Pliny* meant, when giving *Trajan* an account of the Christians, he

Ap. 2. p. 98;

Lib. 10.

Ep. 97.

Part I. tells him that they were wont to meet together to worship Christ *stato die*, upon a set certain day, by which he can be reasonably understood to design no other but the Lords day; for though they probably met at other times, yet he takes notice of this only, either because the Christians, whom he had examin'd, had not told him of their meeting at other times, or because this was their most publick and solemn convention, and which in a manner swallowed up the rest. By the violent persecutions of those times the Christians were forced to meet together before day, so *Pliny* in the same place tells the Emperor, that they assembled *before daylight, to sing their morning hymns to Christ*. Whence it is that *Tertullian* so often mentions their *nocturnal convocations*; for putting the case that his Wife after his decease should marry with a *Gentile-Husband*, amongst other inconveniences he asks her, whether she thought he would be willing to let her rise from his Bed to go to their *night-meetings*; and in the case of persecution he tells *Fabius*, that if they could not celebrate *Dominica solennia*, their Lords-Day Solemnities in the day time, they had the *night* sufficiently clear with the *light* of Christ,

*Ad Uxor.*  
l. 2. c. 4.  
p. 168.

*De fug. in*  
*persecut. c.*  
14. p. 543.

Christ. This gave occasion to their Part I.  
spightful Adversaries to calumniate and asperse them; the Heathen in *Minucius* charges them with their *night-Congregations*, upon which account they are there scornfully called *latebrosa & lucifugax natio* an *obscure and skulking Generation*; and the very first thing that *Celsus* objects is, that the Christians had private and clancular Assemblies, or Combinations; to which *Origen* answers, that if it were so, they might thank them for it who would not suffer them to exercise it more openly; that the Christian Doctrine was sufficiently evident and obvious, and better known through the world, than the opinion and sentiments of their best Philosophers; and that if there were some mysteries in the Christian Religion which were not communicated to every one, 'twas no other thing than what was common in the several Sects of their own Philosophy. But to return.

*M. Fal. p. 72*

*Orig. adv.*  
*Cel. l. 1. p.*  
*4. 7.*

They looked upon the *Lords-Day* as a time to be celebrated with great expressions of joy, as being the happy memory of Christs resurrection, and accordingly restrained whatever might savour of sorrow and sadness; fasting on that day they prohibited with the greatest

Part 1. *Severity*, accounting it utterly unlawful, as *Tertullian* informs us. It was a very bitter censure that of *Ignatius* (or whose ever that Epistle was, for certainly it was not his) that who ever *fasts* on a *Lords-Day* is a *murderer of Christ*; however 'tis certain, that they never fasted on those days, no not in the time of *Lent* it self; nay the *Montanists*, though otherwise great pretenders to fasting and mortification, did yet abstain from it on the *Lords-day*. And as they accounted it a joyful and good day, so they did what ever they thought might contribute to the honour of it. No sooner was *Constantine* come over to the Church, but his principal care was about the *Lords-day*, he commanded it to be solemnly observed, and that by all persons whatsoever, he made it to all a day of *rest*; that men might have nothing to do but to worship God, and be better instructed in the Christian Faith, and spend their whole time without any thing to hinder them in prayer and devotion, according to the custom and discipline of the Church: and for those in his Army who yet remained in their *Paganism* and infidelity, he commanded them upon *Lords-days* to go out into

*De Cor.  
mil. c. 3.  
p. 102.*

*Ep. ad Phi.  
lip. p. 112.*

*Euseb. de  
vit. Const.  
l. 4. c. 18,  
19, 20. p.  
334.*

into the Fields, and there pour out their souls in hearty prayers to God; and that none might pretend their own inability to the duty, he himself composed and gave them a short *form* of prayer, which he enjoind them to make use of every *Lords-Day*: so careful was he that this day should not be *dishonoured* or *mis-employed*, even by those who were yet *strangers* and *enemies* to Christianity. He moreover ordained, that there should be no *Courts* of Judicature open upon this day, no *Suits* or *Tryals* at *Law*, but that for any works of mercy, such as the *emancipating* and setting free of Slaves or Servants, this might be done. That there should be no *Suits* nor demanding debts upon this day, was confirmed by several *Laws* of succeeding Emperours, and that no *Arbitrators* who had the Umpirage of any business lying before them, should at that time have power to determine or take up litigious causes, penalties being entail'd upon any that transgressed herein. *Theodosius the Great*, anno 386. by a second Law ratified one which he had passed long before, wherein he expressly prohibited all publick *Shews* upon the *Lords-Day*, that the worship of God might not be founded

*Cod. Just.  
l. 3. Tit. 12.  
de feriis  
l. 3.*

*Cod. Theod.  
lib. 2. Tit. 8.  
de feriis  
l. 1. lib. 8.  
Tit. 8. l. 3.*

*l. 1. lib. 15.  
Tit. 5. de  
spectacul. 2.*

Part 1. founded with those prophane Solemnities. This Law the younger *Theodosius* some few years after confirmed and enlarged, enacting, that on the Lords day (and some other Festivals there mentioned) not only *Christians*, but even *Jews* and *Heathens* should be restrained from the pleasure of all *Sights* and *Spectacles*, and the *Theatres* be shut up in every place; and whereas it might so happen that the *Birth-day* or *inauguration* of the Emperour might fall upon that day; therefore to let the people know how infinitely he preferred the honour of God, before the concerns of his own majesty and greatness, he commanded that if it should so happen, that then the imperial Solemnity should be put off, and deferred till another day.

*Ib. Leg. 5.  
Dominico.*

I shall take notice but of one instance more of their great observance of this day, and that was their constant *attendance* upon the Solemnities of publick Worship; they did not think it enough to read and pray, and praise God at home, but made conscience of appearing in the *publick* Assemblies, from which nothing but sickness and absolute necessity did detain them: and if sick, or in prison, or under banishment, nothing troubled

troubled them more, than that they Part 1. could not come to Church, and join their devotions to the common Services. If persecution at any time forced them to keep a little close, yet no sooner was there the least mitigation, but they presently returned to their open duty, and publicly met all together. No trivial pretences, no light excuses were then admitted for any ones absence from the Congregation, but according to the merit of the cause severe censures were passed upon them. The Synod of *Illiberis* provided, that if any man dwelling in a City (where usually Churches were nearest hand) should for three *Lords Days* absent himself from the Church, he should for some time be suspended the Communion, that he might appear to be corrected for his fault. They allowed no separate Assemblies, no Congregations but what met in the publick Church; if any man took upon him to make a breach, and to draw people into corners, he was presently condemned, and a futable penalty put upon him. When *Eustathius* Bishop of *Sebastia* (a man pretending to great strictness and austerity of life) began to cast off the Discipline of the Church, and to introduce

*Can. 21.  
p. 28.*



Part 1. duce many odd observations of his own, amongst others, to condemn Priests that were married, to fast on the Lords day, and to keep meetings in private houses, drawing away many, but especially *women*, (as the Historian observes) who leaving their Husbands were led away with error, and from that into great filthiness and impurity. No sooner did the Bishops of those parts discover it, but meeting in Council at *Gangra* the *Metropolis* of *Paphlagonia* about the year 340. they condemned and cast them out of the Church, passing these two *Canons* among the rest: *If any one shall teach that the House of God is to be despised, and the assemblies that are held in it, let him be accursed: If any shall take upon him out of the Church, privately to preach at home, and making light of the Church shall do those things that belong only to the Church, without the presence of the Priest, and the leave and allowance of the Bishop, let him be accursed.* Correspondent to which, the *Canons* called *Apostolical*, and the Council of *Antioch*, ordain, that if any *Presbyter* setting light by his own *Bishop*, shall withdraw and set up *separate* meetings, and erect another *Altar* (*i. e.* says *Zonaras*, keep unlawful

*Socr. l. 3.  
c. 14 p. 521.*

*Conc. Gangra.  
c. 14 p. 521.*

*Can. 31.  
Conc. Antioch. Can. 5.*

lawful Conventicles, preach privately, and administer the Sacrament) that in such a case he shall be *deposed*, as ambitious and tyrannical, and the people communicating with him be *excommunicate*, as being factious and schismatical; only this not to be done, till after the third admonition. After all that has been said, I might further show what esteem and value the first Christians had of the Lords day, by those great and honourable things they have spoken concerning it; of which I'll produce but two passages; the one is that in the Epistle *ad Magnesios*, which if not *Ignatius*, must yet be acknowledged an ancient Authour: *Let every one* (says he) *that loves Christ keep the Lords day Festival, the resurrection day, the Queen and Empress of all days, in which our life was raised again, and death conquered by our Lord and Saviour.* The other that of *Theophilus* Bishop of *Alexandria*, who speaks thus, *that both custom and reason challenge from us, that we should honour the Lords day, and keep it Festival, seeing on that day it was that our Lord Jesus Christ compleated his resurrection from the dead.*

*Page. 149.*

*Ediſt. Theoph. apud Balsam. in Synod. Tom. 2. part 1. p. 170.*

Next to the Lords day, the *Sabbath*,  
or

**Part 1.** or *Saturday* (for so the word *Sabbatum* is constantly used in the Writings of the Fathers, when speaking of it as it relates to Christians) was held by them in great veneration, and especially in the *Eastern* parts honoured with all the publick Solemnities of Religion. For which we are to know, that the Gospel in those parts mainly prevailing amongst the *Jews*, they being generally the first Converts to the Christian Faith, they still retained a mighty reverence for the *Mosaic* Institutions, and especially for the *Sabbath*, as that which had been appointed by God himself (as the memorial of his rest from the work of Creation) settled by their great Master *Moses*, and celebrated by their Ancestors for so many Ages, as the solemn day of their publick Worship, and were therefore very loth that it should be wholly antiquated and laid aside. For this reason it seemed good to the prudence of those times (as in others of the Jewish Rites, so in this) to indulge the humour of that people, and to keep the Sabbath as a day for religious offices. Hence they usually had most parts of Divine Service performed upon that day, they met together for publick Prayers,

Prayers, for reading the Scriptures, celebration of the Sacraments, and such like duties. This is plain not only from some passages in *Ignatius* and *Clemens* his Constitutions, but from Writers of more unquestionable credit and authority. *Athanasius* Bishop of *Alexandria* tells us, that they assembled on Saturdays, not that they were infected with *Judaism*, but only to worship *Jesus Christ* the Lord of the Sabbath: and *Socrates* speaking of the usual times of their publick meeting, calls the Sabbath and the Lords day the weekly Festivals, on which the Congregation was wont to meet in the Church, for the performance of Divine Services. Therefore the Council of *Laodicea* amongst other things decreed, that upon *Saturdays* the Gospels and other Scriptures should be read, that in *Lent* the Eucharist should not be celebrated but upon *Saturday* and the *Lords day*, and upon those days only in the time of *Lent* it should be lawful to commemorate and rehearse the names of Martyrs. Upon this day also aswel as upon *Sunday* all *Fasts* were severely prohibited (an infallible argument they counted it a Festival day) one *Saturday* in the year only excepted, viz. that

Part 1.  
Homil. de  
Sement. in  
init.

Hist. Eccl.  
l. 6. c. 8.  
p. 312.

Can. 16.  
49. 51.

Part I. that before *Easter-day*, which was always observed as a solemn Fast. Things so commonly known as to need no proof. But though the Church thought fit thus far to correspond with Jewish Converts, as solemnly to observe the Sabbath; yet to take away all offence, and to vindicate themselves from compliance with Judaism, they openly declared that they did it only in a *Christian way*, and kept it not as a Jewish Sabbath, as is expressly affirmed by *Athanasius, Nazianzen*, and others; and the forementioned *Laodicean Synod* has a *Canon* to this purpose, *that Christians should not judaize, and rest from all labour on the Sabbath, but follow their ordinary works (i. e. so far as consisted with their attendance upon the publick Assemblies) and should not entertain such thoughts of it, but that still they should prefer the Lords day before it; and on that day rest as Christians; but if any were found to judaize they should be accursed.*

*Athanas.*  
*Homil.*  
*de Sement.*  
*Tom. 1. p.*  
*835.*  
*Can. 29.*

Thus stood the case in the *Eastern Church*; in those of the *West* we find it somewhat different, amongst them it was not observed as a religious *Festival*, but kept as a constant *Fast*, the reason whereof (as 'tis given by Pope *Inno-*  
*cent*,

*Innocent* in an Epistle to the Bishop of *En-* Part I.  
*gubium*, where he treats of this very case) seems most probable; if (*says he*) we commemorate Christs resurrection not only at *Easter*, but every *Lords day*, and fast upon *Friday* because 'twas the day of his passion, we ought not to pass by *Saturday*, which is the middle-time between the days of grief and joy; the Apostles themselves spending those two days (*viz. Friday* and the *Sabbath*) in great sorrow and heaviness: and he thinks no doubt ought to be made but that the Apostles fasted upon those two days, whence the Church had a *Tradition*, that the Sacraments were not to be administered on those days, and therefore concludes, that every *Saturday* or *Sabbath* ought to be kept a Fast. To the same purpose the Council of *Illiberis* or-  
*Can. 36.*  
*P. 35.*  
dained, that a *Saturday Festival* was an error that ought to be reformed, and that men ought to fast upon every Sabbath. But though this seems to have been the general practice, yet it did not obtain in all places of the *West* alike. In *Italy* it felt, 'twas otherwise at *Milain*; where *Saturday* was a Festival; and 'tis said in the life of *S. Ambrose*, who was Bishop of that See, that he constantly  
*Paulin in*  
*vit. Amb.*  
*operibus*  
*Ambros.*  
*prefixa*  
dined

Part 1. dined as well upon *Saturday* as the Lords day, (it being his custom to dine upon no other days but those, and the memorials of the Martyrs) and used also upon that day to preach to the people; though so great was the prudence and moderation of that good man, that he bound not up himself in these indifferent things, but when he was at *Millain* he dined upon *Saturdays*, and when he was at *Rome*, he fasted as they did upon those days: This *S. Augustine* assures us he had from his own mouth; for when his Mother *Mônica* came after him to *Millain* (where he then resided). she was greatly troubled to find the *Saturday* Fast not kept there, as she had found it in other places; for her satisfaction he immediately went to consult *S. Ambrose*, then Bishop of that place, who told him he could give him no better advice in the cause, that to do as he did: *When I come to Rome* (said he) *I fast on the Saturday as they do at Rome, when I am here I do not fast. So likewise you, to whatsoever Church you come, observe the custom of that place, if you mean not either to give or take offence.* With this answer he satisfied his Mother, and ever after when he thought of it, looked upon

*Ad Janu-  
ar. Epist.  
118. col.  
557 tom.2.*

on it as an *Oracle* sent from *Heaven*. So Part 1. that even in *Italy* the *Saturday* Fast was not universally observed. Nay a very learned man (and a Bishop of the *Roman Church*) thinks it highly probable, that for the first Ages especially, *Saturday* was no more kept as a Fast at *Rome*, than in the Churches of the *East*: though the great argument whereby he would establish it (*viz.* because some *Latine* Churches, who must needs follow the pattern of the Church of *Rome*, did not keep it so) is very infirm and weak; and needs no more than that very instance of the Church of *Millain* to refute it, which though under the *Popes* nose, did not yet keep that day as a Fast, although this was many years after it had been so established and observed at *Rome*.

*Albasp. de  
vet. Eccl.  
rit. obs.  
13. p. 90.*

And now that I am got into this business, I shall once for all dispatch the matter about their *Fasts*, before I proceed to their other Festivals. 'Tis certain the ancient Christians had two sorts of solemn Fasts, *weekly* and *annual*. Their *weekly* Fasts (called *jejunia quarta & sexta ferie*) were kept upon *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, appointed so, as we are told, for this reason, because on *Wed-*  
nesday

Part 1. *Wednesday* our Lord was betrayed by *Judas*,  
*Vid. Gen. sicut. App. l. 3. c. 14. p. 929. l. 7. c. 24. p. 978. Serm. Com. pen. p. 466. Hares. 85. p. 387.*  
*De Orat. c. 14. p. 136.*  
*Serm. Com. pend. de fid. p. 466.*  
*De jejun. c. 13. p. 551.*  
*De Orat. c. 14. p. 135.*  
*Vid. de jejun. p. 545. A. p. 544. B.*  
*on Friday* he was crucified by the *Jews*. This custom *Epiphanius* (how truly I know not) refers to the Apostles, and elsewhere tells us that those days were observed as Fasts through the whole world. These Fasts they called their *Stations* (not because they stood all the while, but by an allusion to the *military Stations* and keeping their Guards, as *Tertullian* observes, they kept close at it) and they usually lasted *two days* *invidius*, as *Epiphanius* informs us, *till the ninth hour, i. e. till three of the Clock in the Afternoon*, at which time having ended their Fast devotions, they received the *Eucharist*, and then broke up the Station, and went home; whence it is that *Tertullian* calls them *stationum semijejuna*, the *half Fasts of Stations*: and he seems to censure the practice of some who having privately resolved upon an entire Fast of the whole day, refused to receive the *Eucharist* at the publick stationary Fasts, because they thought that by eating and drinking the sacramental Elements, they put a period to their fasting: for it was usual in those times with many, after the stationary Fasts were ended, to continue and hold on the

the Fast until the evening. The *Historian* tells us that it had been a very ancient custom in the Church of *Alexandria*, upon these days to have the Scriptures read, and expounded, and all other parts of Divine Service, except the celebration of the Sacrament, and that it was chiefly in those days that *Origen* was wont to teach the people: whether the omitting of the Sacrament then might be a peculiar custom to that Church, I know not, certain I am 'twas upon those days administred in other places. So *S. Basil* enumerating the times how oft they received it every week, expressly puts *Wednesday* and *Friday* into the number. The remains of these *primitive Stations* are yet observed in our Church at this day, which by her 15. Canon has ordained, *That though Wednesdays and Fridays be not holy days, yet that weekly upon those times Minister and People shall resort to Church at the accustomed hours of prayer.*

Their *Annual Fast* was that of *Lent*, by way of preparation to the Feast of our Saviours Resurrection, this (though not in the modern use of it) was very ancient, though far from being an *Apostolical Canon*, as a learned Prelate of our Church

Part 1.  
*Socrat. l. 4. c. 22. p. 28.*

*Tom. 3. B. p. 289. p. 279.*

*B. Tayl. Dist. Dist. lib. 3. c. 4. p. 629.*

Part 1. Church has fully proved. From the very first Age of the Christian Church 'twas customary to fast before *Easter*; but for how long, it was variously observed according to different times and places; some fasting so many days, others so many weeks, and some so many days on each week; and 'tis, most probably thought, that it was at first stiled *Id. ib. vid. Thorndike. rel. assembl. c. 8. p. 276.* τεσσαρεσθι or *Quadragesima*, not because 'twas a Fast of *forty days*, but of *forty hours*, begun about twelve on *Friday* (the time of our Saviours falling under the power of death) and continued till *Sunday morning*, the time of his rising from the dead. Afterwards it was enlarged to a longer time, drawn out into more days, and then weeks, till it came to three, and at last to six or seven weeks. But concerning the different observations of it in several places, let them who desire to know more consult *Socrates* and *Sozomen*, who both speak enough about it. This *Quadragesimal* Fast was kept in those times with great piety and Religion, people generally applying themselves with all seriousness to acts of penance and mortification, whence *Chrysostom* calls *Lent* the remedy and *Physick* of our souls; and to the

the end that the observation of it might be more grave and solemn, *Theodosius M.* and his Colleague Emperours passed two Laws, that during the time of *Lent* all Process and enquiry into criminal actions should be suspended, and no corporal punishments inflicted upon any; it being unfit (as the second of those Laws expresses it) that in the holy time of *Lent* the *body* should suffer punishment, while the *soul* is expecting absolution. But with what care soever they kept the preceeding parts, 'tis certain they kept the close of it with a mighty strictness and austerity, I mean the last week of it, that which immediately preceded the Feast of *Easter*; this they consecrated to more peculiar acts of prayer, abstinence; and devotion; and whereas in the other parts of *Lent* they ended their fast in the evening, in this they extended it to the Cock-crowing, or first glimpse of the morning; to be sure they ended it not before midnight, for to break up the Fast before that time was accounted a piece of great profaneness and intemperance, as *Dionysius* Bishop of *Alexandria* determines in a Letter to *Basilides*, wherein he largely and learnedly states the case. This was the

Part 1.  
God The-  
od. lib. 9.  
Tit. 25. de  
Question.  
ll 4. & 5.

Constit. A-  
post. l. 1. c.  
c. 17, 18.  
p. 922.  
Epiphan.  
adv. hær.  
tom. p. 466.

Apud Zon-  
nar. in Sy-  
nod. Tom 2.  
part. 1. p. 1.

Part 1. *Hebdomada Magna*, the great (or holy) week; so called (says *Chrysostom*) not that it has either more *hours* or *days* in it than other weeks, but because this is the week in which *truly great* and inef-  
*Hom. 30. in Gen. p. 328.* fable good things were purchased for us; within this time death was conquered, the curse destroyed, the Devils tyranny dissolved, his instruments broken, Heaven opened, Angels rejoyced, the partition-wall broken down, and God and man reconciled. For this cause we call it the *great week*, for this cause men fast, and watch, and do Alms, to do the greater honour to it: the Empe-  
 rours themselves, to shew what veneration they have for this time, commanding all Suits and Processes at Law to cease, Tribunal-doors to be shut up, and Pri-  
 soners to be set free, imitating herein their great Lord and Master, who by his death at this time delivered us from the prison and the chains of sin; mean-  
 ing herein those Laws of *Theodosius*, *Gratian*, and *Valentinian*, which we lately mentioned.

We proceed now to enquire what other Festivals there were in those first Ages of the Church, which I find to be chiefly these; *Easter*, *Whitsuntide*, and  
*Epiphany*,

*Epiphany*, which comprehended two, Part 1.  
*Christmas* and *Epiphany* properly so called. I reckon them not in their proper order, but as I suppose them to have taken place in the Church. Of these *Easter* challenges the precedence both for its antiquity, and the great stir about it; that in and from the very times of the Apostles (besides the weekly returns of the Lords day) there has been always observed an *Anniversary* Festival in memory of Christs *Resurrection*, no man can doubt, that has any insight into the affairs of the ancient Church; all the dispute was about the particular time when it was to be kept, which became a matter of as famous a Controversie as any that in those Ages exercised the Christian world. The state of the case was briefly this; the Churches of *Asia* the less kept their *Easter* upon the same day, whereon the Jews celebrated their *Passover*, viz. upon the 14. day of the first Month (which always began with the appearance of the Moon) mostly answering to our *March*, and this they did, upon what day of the week soever it fell, and hence were stiled *Quartodecimans*, because keeping *Easter quarta decima Luna*, upon the  
 14.

Part I. 14. day after the *pasch* or appearance of the *Moon*. The other Churches, and especially those of the *West* did not follow this custom, but kept *Easter* upon the Lords day following the day of the Jewish Passover, partly the more to honour the day, and partly to distinguish between Jews and Christians: the *Asiatics* pleaded for themselves the practice of the *Apostles*; *Polycarpus* Bishop of *Smyna*, who had lived and conversed with them, having kept it upon that day, together with *S. John* and the rest of the *Apostles*, as *Irenaeus* (who himself knew *Polycarpus*, and doubtless had it from his own mouth) speaks in a Letter about this very thing though himself was of the other side. And *Polycrates* in a Letter to the same purpose, instances not only in *S. John*, but *S. Philip* the Apostle; who himself and his whole Family used so to keep it, from whom it had been conveyed down in a constant and uninterrupted observance through all the Bishops of those places, some whereof he there enumerates, and tells us that seven Bishops of that place in a constant succession had been his Kinsmen, and himself the eighth, and that it had never been kept by them upon any other day; this

*Euseb. Hist.*  
*Eccl. l. 5.*  
*c. 24. p.*  
*193.*

*Ibid. p. 191.*

this we are not so to understand, as if Part I. *S. John* and the Apostles had instituted this Festival, and commanded it to be observed upon *that day*, but rather that they did it by way of *condescension*, accommodating their practice in a matter indifferent to the humour of the *Jewish Converts* (whose number in those parts was very great) as they had done before in several other cases, and particularly in observing the *Sabbath* or *Saturday*. The other Churches also (says *Eusebius*.) *Id. c. 23.* had for their patronage an *Apostolical Tradition*, or at least pretended it: and were the much more numerous party. This difference was the spring of great bustles in the Church; for the Bishops of *Rome* stickled hard to impose their custom upon the *Eastern Churches*, whereupon *Polycarpus* comes over to *Rome* to confer with *Anicetus* who was then Bishop about it; and though they could not agree the matter, yet they parted fairly. After this *Pope Victor* renewed the quarrel, and was so fierce and peremptory in the case, that he either actually did, or (as a learned man inclines rather to think, probably to mollify the *odium* of the Fact) severely threatened to excommunicate those *Eastern Churches*

*Id. l. 4. c.*  
*14. p. 127.*

*H. Vales.*  
*Annot. in.*  
*Euseb. l. 5.*  
*c. 24. p.*  
*105. col. 1.*



Part I. Churches for standing out against it: this rash and bold attempt was ill resented by the sober and moderate men of his own party, who writ to him about it; and particularly *Irenæus* (a man, as *Eusebius* notes, truly answering his name, both in his temper and his life, *quiet and peaceable*) who gravely reprov'd him for renting the peace of the Church, and troubling so many famous Churches for observing the customs derived to them from their Ancestors, with much more to the same purpose. But the *Asian* Bishops little regarded what was either said or done at *Rome*, and still went on in their old course, though by the diligent practices of the other party they lost ground, but yet still made shift to keep the cause on foot till the time of *Constantine*, who finding this controversie amongst others much to disquiet the peace of the Church, did for this and some other reasons summon the great Council of *Nice*, by whom this question was solemnly determin'd, *Easter* ordain'd to be kept upon one and the same day throughout the world, not according to the custom of the *Jews*, but upon the *Lords day*, and this Decree ratified and published by the imperial Letters to all the Churches.

*Euseb. de  
vit. Con-  
stant. l. 3.  
c. 14.. 17.*

The

The Eve of *Vigils* or this Festival Part I. were wont to be celebrated with more than ordinary pomp, with solemn watchings, with multitudes of lighted *Torches* both in the Churches and their own private houses, so as to turn the night itself into day, and with the general resort and confluence of all ranks of men, both Magistrates and people. This custom of lights at that time was, if not begun, at least much augmented by *Constantine*, who set up Lamps and *Torches* in all places as well within the Churches as without; that through the whole City the night seem'd to outvye the Sun at Noonday. And this they did (as *Nazianzen* intimates) as a *prodromus* or forerunner of that great light, even the *Sun of righteousness*, which the next day arose upon the world. For the *Feast* itself, the same Father calls it the holy and famous *Passover*, a day which is the *Queen* of days, the *Festival* of *Festivals*, and which as far excels all other, even of those which are instituted to the honour of *Christ*, as the *Sun* goes beyond the other *Stars*. A time it was famous for works of *mercy* and *charity*, every one both of *Clergy* and *Laity* striving to contribute liberally to the poor: a duty

*Naz. Or. 2.  
in Pasch.  
Orat. 41.  
p. 676.*

*Euseb. de  
vit. Const.  
l. 4. c. 22.  
p. 536.*

*Ibid. p.  
677.*

*Ibid. & O.  
rat. 19.  
p. 304.*

(as

Part I. (as one of the *Ancients* observes) very congruous and suitable to that happy season, for what more fit, than that such as beg relief should be enabled to rejoice at that time, when we remember the common fountain of our mercies? Therefore no sooner did the morning of this day appear, but *Constantine* used to arise, and in imitation of the love and kindness of our blessed *Saviour*, to bestow the richest and most noble gifts, and to diffuse the influences of his bounty over all parts of his *Empire*. And his example herein it seems was followed by most of his Successors, who used upon this Solemnity by their imperial Orders to release all *Prisoners*, unless such as were in for more heavy and notorious crimes, high Treason, Murders, Rapes, Incest, and the like. And *Chrysostom* tells us of a Letter of *Theodosius* the Great sent at this time throughout the Empire, wherein he did not only command, that all Prisoners should be released and pardoned, but wished he was able to recall those that were already executed, and to restore them to life again. And because by the negligence and remissness of messengers, or any accident those Imperial Letters might sometimes happen to

come

Commod.  
instruction.  
c. 75. p. 57.

Euseb. nt.  
supra.

Hom. 20.  
ad pop. An.  
tioch. p.  
230. tom.  
1.

come too late, therefore *Valentinian* the younger provided by a standing Law, that whether order came or not, the Judges should dispence the accustomed indulgence, and upon *Easter* day in the morning cause all Prisons to be open, the Chains to be knock'd off, and the persons set at liberty.

The next Feast considerable in those primitive times, was that of *Whitsunday* or *Pentecost*, a Feast of great eminency amongst the *Jews*, in memory of the Law delivered at Mount *Sinai* at that time, and for the gathering and bringing in of their *Harvest*; and of no less note amongst *Christians* for the *Holy Ghosts* descending upon the *Apostles* and other Christians, in the visible appearance of *fiery cloven tongues*, which hapned upon that day, and those miraculous powers then conferred upon them. It was observed with the same respect to *Easter*, that the *Jews* did with respect to their *Passover*, viz. (as the word imports) just *fifty days* after it, reckoning from the second day of that Festival: it seems to some to have commenced from the first rise of Christianity, not only because the *Apostles* and the Church were assembled upon that day, but because

Part I.  
Lib. 9. c.  
Theod. Tit.  
38. de in-  
dulg. l. 8.

Part I. S. Paul made so much haste to be at *Jerusalem* the day of *Pentecost*, which they understand of his great desire to keep it there as a *Christian Feast*. But the argument seems to me no way conclusive, for the Apostle might desire to be there at that time, both because he was sure to meet with a great number of the Brethren, and because he should have a fitter opportunity to preach the Gospel to the *Jews*, who from all parts flock'd thither to the Feast, as our Saviour himself for the same reason used to go up to *Jerusalem* at all their great and solemn Feasts. But however this was, 'tis certain the observation of it is ancient, 'twas mentioned by *Irenæus* in a Book which he wrote concerning *Easter*, as the Author of the *Quest. 115. Questions and Responses* in *J. Martyr* tells us; by *Tertullian*, and after him by *Origen* more than once. This Feast is by us stiled *Whitsunday*, partly because of those vast diffusions of light and knowledge which upon this day were shed upon the *Apostles*, in order to the enlightning of the world; but principally because this (as also *Easter*) being the stated time for *Baptism* in the ancient Church, those who were baptized put on *white Garments*, in token of that

*Quest. 115.*  
*Tert. de*  
*Idol. c. 14.*  
*p. 94.*  
*Adv. Cels.*  
*18 p. 392.*

pure and innocent course of life they had Part II. I  
now engaged in (of which more in its proper place:) this white Garment they wore till the next *Sunday* after; and then laid it aside; whence the *Octave* or *Sunday* after *Easter* came to be stiled *Dominica in Albis*, the *Sunday in white*, it being then that the new-baptized put off their white Garments. We may observe that in the Writers of those times the whole space of fifty days between *Easter* and *Whitsunday* goes often under the name of *Pentecost*, and was in a manner accounted Festival, as *Tertullian* in-*Tert. de*  
forms us, and the forty third *Canon* of *Idol. c. 14.*  
the *Illyberitan* Council seems to intimate. *de Bapt. c.*  
During this whole time Baptism was *19. de Cor.*  
conferred, all Fasts were suspended and *mil. c. 3.*  
counted unlawful, they prayed standing *vid. Max.*  
as they did every Lords day; and at *Taurin Ho.*  
this time read over the *Acts of the Apo-*  
*stles*, wherein their sufferings and mira-  
cles are recorded, as we learn from a *mil. 3 de S.*  
Law of the younger *Theodosius*, wherein *Pentecost:*  
this custom is mentioned, and more *p. 223.*  
plainly from *S. Chrysostom*, who treats *c. Th. lib.*  
of it in an *Homily* on purpose; where *15. Tr. 5.*  
he gives this reason why that Book *Serm. 73.*  
which contained those actions of the *Cur. Act.*  
*App legat.*  
*tur in Pen.*  
*1. ec. Tom. 5.*  
*postles* which were done after *Pentecost*,  
should

Part 1. should yet be read before it, when as at all other times those parts of the Gospel were read, which were proper to the season, because the Apostles miracles being the grand *confirmation* of the truth of Christs *Resurrection*, and those miracles recorded in that Book, it was therefore most proper to be read next to the Feast of the Resurrection.

*Epiphany* succeeds; this word was of old promiscuously used either for the Feast of Christs *Nativity*, or for that which we now properly call by that name: afterwards the Titles became distinct; that of Christs *Birth* (or as we now term it *Christmas-day*) was called γενέθλια the *Nativity*, and Θεοφάνια the *appearance of God in the flesh*; two names importing the same thing as *Nazianzen* notes. For the antiquity of it, the first footsteps I find of it are in the second Century, though I doubt not but it might be celebrated before, mentioned by *Theophilus* Bishop of *Cæsaria*; about the time of the Emperour *Commodus*: but if any credit might be given to the *Decretal* Epistles, it was somewhat elder than that, *Pope Telesphorus*, who lived under *Antoninus Pius*, ordaining Divine Service to be celebrated, and an angelical Hymn to

ΕΙΣ ΤΗ  
ΘΕΟΦΑΝΙΑ,  
ΟΥΤΩΣ. 38.  
p 613.

Decret. Te-  
lesph. scilicet.  
notte vero.

to be sung the night before the *Nativity* Part 1. of our *Saviour*. However that it was kept before the times of *Constantine*, we have this sad instance. That when the persecution raged under *Dioclesian*, who then kept his Court at *Nicomedia*, amongst other acts of barbarous cruelty done there, finding multitudes of Christians young and old met together in the Temple, upon the day of Christs *Nativity*, to celebrate that Festival, he commanded the Church doors to be shut up, and fire to be put to it, which in a short time reduced them and the Church to ashes. I shall not dispute, whether it was always observed upon the same day that we keep it now, the *twenty fifth of December*; it seems probable, that for a long time in the *East* it was kept in *January*, under the name, and at the general time of the *Epiphania*, till receiving more light in the case from the Churches of the *West*, they changed it to this day; sure I am *S. Chrysostom* in an Homily on purpose about this very thing affirms, that it was not above ten years since in that Church (*i. e. Antioch*) it began first to be observed upon that day, and there offers several reasons to prove that to be the true day of Christs *Nativity*.

Niceph. H.  
Eccles. l. 7.  
c. 6. p. 446.  
forsan ex  
Sim. Meta-  
phrast. qui  
eadem ha-  
bet in Mar-  
tyr Ind. 6.  
Domn. a-  
pud Sur. ad  
26, De-  
cemb. 10th,  
6.

Serm. 31.  
Tom. 9.  
p. 417.

Part 1. The Feast of *Epiphany*, properly so called, was kept on the *sixth of January*, and had that name from a threefold *apparition* or manifestation commemorated upon that day, which all hapned, though not in the same year, yet upon the same day of the year. The first was the *appearance* of the *Star*, which guided the wise men to Christ. The second was the famous *appearance* at the *baptism* of Christ, when all the persons in the holy *Trinity* did sensibly manifest themselves, the *Father* in the *voice* from Heaven, the *Son* in the *River Jordan*, and the *Holy Ghost* in the visible shape of a *Dove*. This was ever accounted a famous Festival, and as *S. Chrysostom* tells us, was properly called *Epiphany*, because he came in a manner into the world *incognito*; but at his baptism openly appeared to be the Son of God, and was so declared before the world. At this time it was that by his going into the *River Jordan* he did *sanctifie water to the mystical washing away of sin* (as our Church expresses it) in memory whereof, *Chrysostom* tells us, they used in this Solemnity at midnight to draw water, which they looked upon as *consecrated* this day, and carrying it home to lay it up, where it would remain

*Hm. 23.  
de Baptis-  
mo Christi.  
tom 1. p.  
278.*

*Ibid.*

remain pure and uncorrupt for a whole Part 1. year, sometimes two or three years together, the truth whereof must rest upon the credit of that good man. The third *manifestation* commemorated at this time, was that of Christ's *divinity*, which appeared in the first miracle that he wrought in *turning water into Wine*; therefore 'twas called *Bethphania*, because it was done in the *house* at that famous Marriage in *Cana of Galilee*, which our Saviour honoured with his own presence. All these three appearances contributed to the Solemnity of this Festival.

But beside these, there was another sort of Festivals in the primitive Church, kept in commemoration of *Martyrs*: for the understanding of which we are to know, that in those sad and bloody times when the Christian Religion triumphed over persecution, and gained upon the world by nothing more than the constant and resolute sufferings of its professors, whom no threatnings or torments could baffle out of it; the people generally had a vast reverence for those who suffered thus deep in the cause of Christianity, and laid down their lives for the confirmation of it. They

O 3 looked

Part 1. looked upon *Confessors* and *Martyrs* as the great *Champions* of their Religion, who *resisted unto blood*, and dyed upon the spot to make good its ground, and to maintain its honour and reputation; and therefore thought it very reasonable to do all possible honour to their memories, partly that others might be encouraged to the like patience and fortitude, and partly that virtue even in this world might not lose its reward. Hence they were wont once a year to meet at the *Graves* of *Martyrs*, there solemnly to recite their sufferings and their triumphs, to praise their virtues, and to bless God for their pious examples, for their holy lives and their happy deaths, for their Palms and Crowns. These anniversary Solemnities were called *memorie martyrum*, the *memories* of the *Martyrs*, a title mentioned by *Cyprian*, but certainly much older than his time; and indeed when they were first taken up in the Church is I think not so exactly known: the first that I remember to have met with, is that of *Polycarp* (whose martyrdom is placed by *Eusebius* anno 168. under the third Persecution) concerning whose death and sufferings the Church of *Smyrna* (of which

*Epist.* 37.  
p. 41.

*Euseb.*  
*Chron. ad*  
*An.* 168.

he

he was Bishop) giving an account to the Part 1. Church of *Philomelium*, and especially of the place where they had honourably entomb'd his bones, they do profess that (so far as the malice of their Enemies would permit them, and they prayed God nothing might hinder it) they would assemble in that place, and celebrate the *Birth-day* of his Martyrdom with joy and gladness: where we may especially observe, that this Solemnity is stiled his *Birth-day*, and indeed so the primitive Christians used to call the days of their death and passion (quite contrary to the manner of the *Gentiles*, who kept the *Natalitials* of their famous men) looking upon these as the true days of their nativity, wherein they were freed from this Valley of tears, these regions of death, and born again unto the joys and happiness of an endless life. The same account *Origen* gives (if that Book be his, a very ancient Authour however) we keep (*says he*) the memories of the Saints, of our Ancestors, and friends that dye in the faith, both rejoicing in that rest which they have obtained, and begging for our selves a pious consummation in the faith: and we celebrate not the day of their *nativity*, as being

*Euseb. Hist.*  
*Ecccl.* l. 4. c.  
15. p. 135.

*Expos. in*  
*Job.* l. 2. fol.  
39. tom. 2.

O 4

the

Part 1. the *inlet* to sorrow and temptation, but of their *death*, as the *period* of their miseries, and that which sets them beyond the reach of temptations. And this we do, both *Clergie* and *People* meeting together, inviting the poor and needy, and refreshing the Widows and the Orphans; that so our Festival may be both in respect of *them*, whom we commemorate, the memorial of that happy rest which their departed souls do enjoy; and in respect of *us* the *odour* of a *sweet smell* in the sight of God. Under *Constantine* these days were commanded to be observed with great care and strictness, enjoining all his *Lieutenants* and *Governours* of Provinces to see the *memorials* of the *Martyrs* duly honoured; and so sacred were they accounted in those days, that it was thought a piece of prophaneness to be absent from them; therefore *S. Basil* thought he could not use a more solemn argument, to persuade a certain Bishop to come over to him upon this occasion, than to adjure him by the respect he bore to the *memories* of the *Martyrs*, that if he would not do it for his, yet he should for their sakes, towards whom it was unfit he should shew the least disregard. Hence

De vit.  
Const. l. 4. c.  
23 p. 536.

Epist. 336.  
tom. 3. p.  
328.

it is that *Libanius* sometimes takes notice of the *Christians* under no other character than this, *Enemies to the gods*, *that haunt and frequent Tombs and Sepulchers*. For the time of these assemblies it was commonly *once a year*, viz. upon the day of their martyrdom, for which end they took particular care to keep *Registers* of the days of the *Martyrs* passions. So *Cyprian* expressly charges his *Clergie* to note down the days of their decease, that there might be a commemoration of them amongst the *memories* of the *Martyrs*. *Theodoret* tells us, that in his time they did not thus assemble once or twice, or five times in a year, but kept frequent *memorials*, oftentimes every day celebrating the *memorials* of *Martyrs*, with hymns and praises unto God. But I suppose he means it of days appointed to the memory of *particular* *Martyrs*, which being then very numerous, their *memorials* were distinctly fixed upon their proper days, the Festival of *S. Peter*, or *S. Paul*, *Thomas*, *Sergius*, *Marcellus*, &c. as he there enumerates them. For the *places*, these Solemnities were kept at first at the *Tombs* where the *Martyrs* had been buried, which usually were

Part 1.  
Apologes.  
pro doct.  
sua p. 592.

Loco supra  
annot.

De Cur.  
Grac. as-  
sess. Serm.  
8. de mar-  
tyrib. p.  
121.

Part 1. were in the *Cameteria* or *Church-yard*, distinct in those times from their places of Publick Worship, and at a great distance from them, as being commonly without the Cities. Here their burying places where in large *Cryptæ* or *Grots* under ground, where they celebrated these memorials, and whither they used to retire for their common devotions in times of great persecution, when their Churches were destroyed or taken from them. And therefore when *Æmilian* the Governour of *Egypt* under the Reign of *Valerian* would screw up the persecution against Christians, he forbade their meetings, and that they should not so much as assemble in the places which they called their *Church-yards*; the same privilege which *Maximinus* also had taken from them. By reason of the darkness of these places, and their frequent assembling there in the *night*, to avoid the fury of their Enemies, they were forced to use *Lights* and *Lamps* in their publick meetings, but they who make this an argument to patronize their burning of *Lamps* and *Wax-Candles* in their Churches at Noon-day (as 'tis in all the great Churches of the *Roman* Communion) talk at a strange rate of wild in-consequence.

Ensch. Hist.  
lib. 7. c. 11.  
p. 258. l. 9.  
c. 2. p. 349.

consequence. I am sure *S. Hierom* when Part 1. charged with it, denied that they used any in the day time, and never but at night when they rose up to their night-devotions. He confesses indeed 'twas otherwise in the *Eastern* Churches, where when the *Gospel* was to be read, they set up *Lights*, as a token of their *rejoycing* for those happy and glad tidings that were contained in it, *light* having been ever used as a *symbol* and representation of *joy* and *gladness*: A custom probably not much elder than his time. Afterwards when Christianity prevailed in the world, the devotion of Christians erected Churches in those places; the Temples of the Martyrs (*says Theodoret*) being *spacious* and *beautiful*, richly and curiously adorned, and shining with great lustre and brightness. These Solemnities, as the same Author informs us, were kept not like the Heathen Festivals with *luxury* and *obsceneness*, but with *devotion* and *sobriety*, with divine *Hymns* and religious *Sermons*, with fervent *prayers* to God, mixed many times with sighs and tears. Here they heard Sermons and Orations, joined in publick prayers and praises, received the holy Sacrament, offered gifts and charities for

Adv. vigi-  
lant. tom. 2.  
p. 123.

ibid.

Vid. Con-  
stit. App.  
l. 8. c. 45.  
p. 1040.  
Vid. Epi-  
phan. λόγ.  
συνομ.  
μερ. π. 15.  
p. 466.



**Part 1.** for the poor, recited the names of the Martyrs then commemorated with their due elogies and commendations, and their virtues propounded to the imitation of the hearers. For which purpose they had their set *Notaries* who took the *acts, sayings, and sufferings* of Martyrs, which were after *compiled* into particular *Treatises*, and were recited in these annual meetings, and this was the first original of *Martyrologies* in the Christian Church. From this custom of offering up prayers, praises, and alms at those times, it is that the Fathers speak so often of *oblations* and *sacrifices* at the Martyrs Festivals. *Tertullian* often, upon an anniversary day (says he) we make oblations for them that are departed, in memory of their *Natalitia* or Birth days, and to the same purpose elsewhere. As oft (says Cyprian) as by an anniversary commemoration we celebrate the passion days of the Martyrs, we always offer sacrifices for them; and the same phrases oft occur in many others of the Fathers. By which 'tis evident, they meant no more than their publick prayers, and offering uppraises to God for the piety and constancy, and the excellent examples of their Martyrs, their celebrating the Eu-

charist

De Cor.  
mil. c. 3.  
p. 102.  
De exhort.  
Castil. p.  
523.  
De monog.  
p. 521.  
Epist. 34.  
p. 48. & Ep.  
37.

**Part 1.** charist at these times, as the commemoration of Christs sacrifice, their oblation of alms and charity for the poor, every one of which truly may, and often is stiled a *sacrifice* or *oblation*; and are so understood by some of the more moderate, even of the *Romish* Church: and with good reason, for that they did not make any real and formal sacrifices and oblations to Martyrs, but only honour them as *holy men*, and *friends to God*, who for his and our Saviours honour, and the truth of Religion, chose to lay down their lives, I find expressly affirmed by *Theodoret*.

These Festivals being times of mirth and gladness were celebrated with great expressions of love and charity to the poor, and mutual rejoycings with one another. Here they had their *Συνεστια*, or Feasts, every one bringing something to the common Banquet, out of which the poor also had their share. These Feasts at first were very sober and temperate, and such as became the modesty and simplicity of Christians, as we heard before out of *Theodoret*, and is affirmed before him by *Constantine* in his *Oration* to the *Saints*. But degenerating afterwards into excess and intemperance

Rigalt. obs.  
ad Cypr.  
H. Vales.  
annot. ad  
Euseb. Hist.  
annot. p.  
262. Pi.  
charell. de  
missa. p.  
103-107.  
Loco supra  
cit. p. 116.

Cap. 12.  
p. 585.

Part 1. perance, they were every where de-  
 claimed against by the Fathers, till they  
 were wholly laid aside. Upon the ac-  
 count of these Feasts, and for the bet-  
 termaking provisions for them, we may  
 conceive it was that *Markets* came to be  
 kept at these times and places, for of  
 such S. Basil speaks *ἀγοραίαι ἐν τοῖς μνηστέροις*  
*ὑπομνήται*, *Markets held at the memorials*  
*and Tombs of Martyrs*; these he con-  
 demns as highly *unsuitable* to those So-  
 lemnities, which were only instituted  
 for prayer, and a commemoration of the  
 virtues of good men, for our encourage-  
 ment and imitation, and that they ought  
 to remember the severity of our other-  
 wise meek and humble Saviour, who  
 whipt the *Buyers* and *Sellers* out of the  
*Temple*, when by their marketings they  
 had turned the *house of prayer into a*  
*den of thieves*. And the truth is these  
 anniversary commemorations, though in  
 their primitive institution they are high-  
 ly reasonable and commendable, yet  
 through the folly and dotage of men  
 they were after made to minister to  
 great superstition and idolatry; so plain  
 is it that the best and usefulest things  
 may be corrupted to bad purposes. For  
 hence sprang the doctrine and practice  
 of

Reg. fuf.  
 difput. in-  
 terrogat.  
 40. rom. 2.  
 2. p. 589.

of *prayer and invocation of Saints*, and Part 1.  
 their *intercession* with God, the wor-  
 shipping of *Reliques, Pilgrimages*, and  
*visiting Churches*, and offering at the  
*shrines* of such and such Saints, and such  
 like superstitious practices, which in af-  
 ter Ages over-run so great a part of the  
 Christian Church; things utterly un-  
 known to the simplicity of those purer  
 and better times.

## CHAP. VIII.

Of the persons constituting the  
 body of the Church, both peo-  
 ple and Ministers.

*The people distinguished into several ranks.*  
*Catechumens of two sorts. Gradually*  
*instructed in the principles of the Chri-*  
*stian Faith. Accounted only Christians*  
*at large. The more recondite mysteries*  
*of Christianity concealed from persons*  
*till after baptism. Three reasons assign-*  
*ed of it. How long they remained in*  
*the state of Catechumens. The several*  
*Classes of Penitents, the πενιταῖοις,*  
*ἀντιδοκίμοις, ἐκκλησιαστικοῖς, οὐνοδύμοις, the πικροὶ*  
 or

## Part I.

or the faithful. Their particular stations in the Church. Their great reverence for the Lords Supper. The Clergie why called *κλήρῳ*. Of two sorts: the highest Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. Bishops as superiour to Presbyters how ancient by the most learned opposers of Episcopacy. Their office and priviledge, what. Chorepiscopi, who. Their power and priviledge above Presbyters. The *μενοδωτοὶ* or Visitors in every Diocess. Of Metropolitans, what their power and authority above ordinary Bishops; their antiquity. Of Patriarchs, and in what respects superiour to Metropolitans and Archbishops. An account of conforming the external jurisdiction of the Church to the Civil Government of the Roman Empire. Presbyters their place and duty. Whether they preached in the presence of the Bishop. Deacons, their Institution, office, number. The Arch-Deacon. Of inferiour orders. The Sub-deacon. The Acolythus. The Exorcist. The Reader. The Door-keeper. What the nature of their several places. Ordination to these Offices how managed. The people present at and consenting to the Ordination. *Sacerdotes prædicarii*, what. The Christian discipline in this case imitated

imitated by the Emperour Severus, in Part I. appointing Civil Officers. Great tryals and testimonials to be had of persons to be ordained. Clergie-men to rise by degrees. The age usually required in those, that were to be promoted to the several orders. Of Deaconesses, their antiquity, age, and office. The great honour and respect shewed to Bishops and Ministers. Looked upon as common Parents. Nothing of moment done without their leave. Their welcome, and the honour done them where-ever they came: this made good by several instances. Bishops invested with power to determine civil controversies. The plentiful provision made for them. The great priviledges and immunities granted by Constantine, and his Successors to the Bishops and Clergie, noted out of the Theodosian Code.

**F**ROM the consideration of time and place, we proceed to consider the persons that constituted and made up their Religious Assemblies; and they were either the body of the people, or those who were peculiarly consecrated and set apart for the publick ministrations of Religion. For the Body of the people,

Part 1. people, we may observe that as *Christianity* at first generally gain'd admission in great Towns and Cities, so all the *Believers* of that place usually assembled and met together: the Christians also of the Neighbour-Villages resorting thither at times of publick Worship. But Religion encreasing apace, the publick Assembly especially in the greater Cities quickly began to be too vast and numerous, to be managed with any order and conveniency, and therefore they were forced to divide the *body* into particular *Congregations*, who had their *Pastors* and spiritual Guides set over them, but still were under the superintendency and care of him that was the *President* or *Bishop* of the place. And according as the Church could form and establish its discipline, the people either according to their *seniority* and improvement, or according to the *quality* of the present condition they were under, began to be distinguished into several ranks and *Classes*, which had their distinct places in the Church, and their gradual admission to the several parts of the publick Worship. The first were the *Catechumens*, and of these there were two sorts, the *μετάνοιοι*, or more perfect, such

Balsam.  
Zonar.  
Aristen.  
in Can. 4.  
Conc. Neo-  
Caesar.

such as had been *Catechumens* of some Part 1. considerable standing, and were even ripe for Baptism; these might stay not only the reading of the Scriptures, but to the very last part of the first Service. The others were the *ἀπολίστατοι*, the more rude and imperfect, who stood only amongst the *Hearers*, and were to depart the Congregation, as soon as the *Lessons* were read: these were as yet accounted *Heathens*, who applied themselves to the Christian Faith, and were *catechized* and instructed in the more plain grounds and rudiments of Religion. These principles were gradually delivered to them, according as they became capable to receive them; first the more plain, and then the more difficult. Indeed they were very shy of imparting the knowledge of the more recondite Doctrines of *Christianity* to any till after Baptism. So S. Cyril expressly assures us, where speaking to the *illuminate* or Baptized: if during the catechetical exercise, says he, a *Catechumen* shall ask thee, what that means which the Preachers say, tell him not, for he is yet without; and these *mysteries* are delivered to thee only. The weak understanding of a *Catechumen* being no more able to bear such

Præf. ad  
Catech. II.  
lum. p. 13.

Part 1. sublime *mysteries*, than a sick mans head can large and immoderate draughts of Wine. And at the end of his *Preface*.  
*Ibid. p. 21.* he has this note, *These Catechetical discourses may be read by those that are to be baptized, or the faithful already baptized: but to Catechumens or such as are no Christians thou mayst not impart them; for if thou dost, expect to give an account to God.*

*De Spirit. S. c. 27. p. 352. tom. 2.* S. Basil discoursing of the Rites and Institutions of Christianity, divides them into two parts, the *τα κηρύγματα*, and the *τα δόγματα*. The *τα κηρύγματα* were those parts of Religion which might δημοσίως, be familiarly preached and expounded to the people: The *τα δόγματα* were the more sublime and hidden Doctrines and parts of the Christian Faith; and these were ἀποκρύφα, things not rashly and commonly to be divulged, but to be lock'd up in silence. Of this nature were the Doctrines of the *Trinity* and *Hypostatick Union*, and such like, especially of the two *Sacraments*, *Baptism* and the *Lords Supper*. For though they acquainted their young hearers with so much of them as was necessary to stir up their desires, yet as to the main of the things themselves, the sacramental *Symbols*, the manner

*manner* of their celebration, the *modus* Part 1.  
of the divine presence at the holy *Eucharist*, the meaning of all those *mystical* Rites and Ceremonies that were used about them, these were carefully concealed both from *Strangers* and *Catechumens*, and communicated only to those who were solemnly initiated and baptized. Hence that ancient *form* so common in the Sermons and Writings of the Fathers, whereby when accidentally discoursing before the people of any of these mysterious parts of Religion, they used to fetch themselves off with an  
ΙΣΑΞΙΝ ΟΙ ΜΕΜΥΗΜΕΝ ΟΙ  
*Those that are initiated know what is said.*  
This was so usual, that this phrase occurs at least fifty times in the Writings of S. Chrysostom only, as Casaubon hath observed: who has likewise noted three reasons out of the *Fathers*, why they so studiously concealed these parts of their Religion. *First*, the nature of the things themselves, so sublime and remote from vulgar apprehensions, that they would signifie little to *Pagans* or *Catechumens* not yet fully instructed and confirmed in the faith, and would either be lost upon them, or in danger to be derided by them. *Secondly*, that hereby the

*Chrys. Hom. 67. in Genes. p. 719. Tom. 1. & alibi sapiss. Isid. Pelus. l. 4. Epist. 162. p. 82. alii- que. Exercit. 16. ad Annal. Bar. S. 43. p. 556.*

Part 1. *Catechumens* and younger Christians might be inflamed with a greater eagerness of desire to partake of the mysteries and priviledges of the *Faithful*; humane nature being desirous of nothing more, than the knowledge of what is kept and conceal'd from us. To help them forwards in this, S. *Augustine* tells us, that in their publick prayers they were wont to beg of God to inspire the *Catechumens* with a desire of baptismal regeneration. The same account *Chry-*

*Ad Vhal.*  
*Epist. 107.*  
*col. 493.*

*Hom. 2. in* *sofdom* gives us, this being part of the form used in their publick Service, *Let us pray that the most gracious and merciful God would hear the prayers of the Catechumens*; and what it was they prayed for, he presently add, *viz. that they might no longer remain in that state.* Upon these accounts *initiation* by Baptism, but especially *admission* to the Lords Supper, is amongst other titles in the Writers of those times called *Desiderata*, because so earnestly desired and sought for by those that were not yet taken in.

*Vid. Chryf.* The truth is, till persons arrived at this state, they were not accounted *Christians* (or but in a large sense as *Candidates* that stood in order to it) and therefore could not satisfy themselves either

to

to live or dye in that condition, where- Part I.  
in they wanted the great *seals* and *pledges* of their Christianity. *Thirdly*, to beget in mens minds the higher esteem and veneration for these religious mysteries, nothing producing a greater *contempt* even in sacred things, than too much openness and familiarity. So that a little obscurity and concealment might seem necessary to vindicate them from contempt, and secure the majesty and reverence that was due to them. This made the *Fathers & Seniors* of the Church (says S. *Basil*) in prescribing Rites and Laws, leave many things in the dark, behind the vail and curtain, that they might τὸ σεμνὸν τοῖς μυστηρίοις φυλάττειν, preserve the *sacredness* and *dignity* that was due to the mysteries of Religion. For a thing (says he) cannot properly be said to be a *mystery*, when 'tis once expos'd to every vulgar and common ear. But of this enough, if not too much. *Loc. supr. laud.*

And as they were careful to keep the higher parts of Christianity within the cognizance of the *faithful*, so they were not less careful to teach and instruct the *Catechumens* in all those principles they were capable of being taught. This at their first coming over was done pri-

P 4

vately

Part 1. vately and at home, by persons deputed on purpose to that office by the Bishop, (as *Balsamon* clearly intimates) till they were sufficiently instructed in the first and more intelligible principles of the faith. Then they were admitted into the *Congregation*, and suffered to be present at some parts of the Divine Service, especially the *Sermons*, which were made for the building them up unto higher measures of knowledge; which being ended, they were commanded to *depart* the Church, not being suffered to be present at the more solemn Rites, especially the celebration of the Lords Supper: and in this manner they were trained up, till they were initiated by baptism, and taken into the highest form of Christians. How long persons remained in the state of the *Catechumens* is difficult to determine, it not being always nor in all places alike, but longer in some and shorter in others, and probably according to the capacity of the persons. The *Apostolick Constitutions* appoint *three years* for the *Catechumen* to be instructed; but provide withal that if any one be diligent and virtuous, and have a ripeness of understanding for the thing, he may be admitted to Baptism sooner:

In Can. 26.  
Conc. Laodice.  
die.

Lib 8.2.  
32 p. 1032

sooner: for (*say they*) not the *space* of Part 1. time; but the *fitness* and *manners* of men, are to be regarded in this matter.

The next sort were the *Penitents*, such as for some misdemeanours were under the censures and severity of the Church, and were gradually to obtain absolution from it. Of these there were several degrees, five especially mentioned by S. Gregory of Neo-Cæsarea, who liv'd about the year 250. The first were the *ἐπισκευάζοντες*, such as *wept* and *lamented*, and were rather *Candidates* to be received into the order of *Penitents*, than *Penitents* properly so called. These usually stood in a squalid and mournful habit at the *Church-Porch*, with tears and great importunity begging of the *Faithful* as they went in, to pray for them. The second were the *ἠκούοντες*, the *Hearers*, who were admitted to hear the holy Scriptures read and expounded to the people. Their *station* was at the upper end of the *Narthex*, or first part of the Church, and were to depart the *Congregation* at the same time with the *Catechumens*. The third *Class* of *Penitents* was that of the *προσκύοντες*, the *Prostrate*, because service being ended, they fell down before the Bishop, who together with

Epist. Cæ.  
non. περὶ  
τῶν ἐπισκευ-  
άζοντων.  
ἀποστ. γ.  
Can. 11.  
p. 121.

Sozom. H.  
Eccl. lib. 7.  
c. 16 p. 727

**Part 1.** with the Congregation falling down and making confession in their behalf, after rais'd them up, and laid his hands upon them. These stood within the body of the Church next the *Pulpit* or *Reading-Pew*, and were to depart together with the *Catechumens*. The fourth were the *Exorcizati*, the *Consistentes*, such as stayed with the rest of the Congregation, and did not depart with the *Catechumens*, but after they and the other Penitents were gone out, stayed and joined in prayer and singing (but not in receiving the Sacrament) with the faithful. These after some time were advanced into the fifth and last order of the *Communicantes* (*μὴ ἐξοὶ τῶν ἀγισμῶν* S. Gregory calls it) and were admitted to the participation of the holy Sacrament. This was the state of the *Penitents* in the primitive Church. Persons having fully passed through the state of the *Catechuminate*, became then immediate Candidates of Baptism, presented their names to the Bishop, and humbly prostrating themselves begged that they might be entred into the Church. These were called *Competentes*, because they did *Competere gratiam Christi*, sue for the grace of *Christ* conferred in Baptism. The last rank

rank was that of the *πρώτοι* or the *Faithful*. **Part 1.** who having been baptized and confirmed, and having approved themselves by the long train and course of a strict pious life, were then admitted to the participation of the *Lords Supper*; which being the highest and most venerable mystery of the *Christian Religion*, was not then rashly given to any, but to such only as had run through all other degrees, and by a course of piety evidenced themselves to be such real and faithful *Christians*, as that the highest mysteries and most solemn parts of Religion might be committed to them. This was the highest order, and looked upon with great regard, and for any of this rank to lapse and be overtaken with a fault, cost them severer penances, than were imposed upon the inferiour forms of Christians.

This in short was the state of the people. But because 'tis not possible any body or community of men should be regularly managed without some particular persons to superintend, direct, and govern the affairs of the whole Society, therefore we are next to enquire what persons there were in the primitive Church, that were peculiarly set apart to



Part I. to steer its affairs, and to attend upon the publick Offices and Ministrations of it. That God always had a *peculiar* people, whom he selected for himself out of the rest of mankind, is too evident to need any proof. Such were the *Patriarchs*, and the *holy seed* of old : such the *Jews*, chosen by him above all other Nations in the world. This was his *kingdome*, his particular *lot* and portion, comprehending the body of the people in general. But afterwards this title was confin'd to narrower bounds, and became appropriate to that *Tribe*, which God had made choice of to *stand before him*, to wait at his *Altar*, and to minister in the services of his Worship. And after the expiration of their *Oeconomy*, was accordingly used to denote the *ministry* of the *Gospel*, the persons peculiarly consecrated and devoted to the service of God in the Christian Church : the *Clergie* being those, *qui divino cultui ministeria religionis impendunt* (as they are defin'd in a Law of the Emperour *Constantine*) who are set apart for the *ministries* of Religion, in matters relating to the *Divine Worship*. Now the whole *ecclesiam* & *ecclesiastic* (as 'tis often call'd in the *Apostles Canons*) the roll of the

C. Th. lib.  
16. Tit. 3.  
de Episc.  
Eccl. &  
Cler. l. 2.

the *Clergie* of the ancient Church (taking Part I. it within the compass of its first four hundred years) consisted of *two sorts* of persons ; the *iepeiroi*, who were peculiarly consecrated to the more *proper* and *immediate* acts of the Worship of God : and the *sunegtrai*, such as were set apart only for the *more mean and common* services of the Church. Of the first sort were these three, *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*.

The first and principal Officer of the Church was the President or *Bishop*, usually chosen out of the *Presbyters*. I shall not here concern my self in the disputes, whether *Episcopacy* as a superior order to *Presbytery*, was of *divine institution* (a controverſie sufficiently ventilated in the late times) it being enough to my purpose, what is acknowledged both by *Blondel* and *Salmasius*, the most learned defenders of *Presbytery*, that *Bishops* were distinct from, and superior to *Presbyters* in the second *Century*, or the next *Age* to the *Apostles*. The main work and office of a *Bishop* was to *teach* and instruct the people, to *administer* the *Sacraments*, to *absolve* *Penitents*, to *eject* and *excommunicate* obstinate and incorrigible offenders, to

*preside*

Part 1. *preside* in the Assemblies of the Clergy, to *ordain* inferiour Officers in the Church, to *call* them to *account* and to *suspend* or deal with them according to the nature of the offence, to urge the *observance* of Ecclesiastical Laws, and to *appoint* and institute such indifferent Rites, as were for the decent and orderly administration of his Church. In short, according to the notation of his name he was *exorator*, a *Watchman* and *Sentinel*, and therefore oblig'd *ἐπιτοκονῆν*, diligently and carefully to *inspect* and observe, to *superintend* and provide for those that were under his charge. This *Zonaras* tells us was implied in the Bishops *Throne*, being placed on *high* in the most eminent part of the Church, to denote how much 'twas his duty from thence to overlook, and very diligently to observe the people that were under him. These and many more were the unquestionable rights and duties of the Episcopal Office; which because it was very difficult and troublesome for one man to discharge, especially where the *μεγαλία* or *Diocese* (as we now call it) was any thing large, therefore upon the multiplying of Country Churches, it was thought fit to take in a subordinate sort

In Can. A.  
post. Can.  
38.

sort of Bishops called *Chorepiscopi*. *Con-* Part 1.  
*try* or (as amongst us they have been called) *suffragan* Bishops, whose business it was to *superintend* and inspect the Churches in the *Country*, that lay more remote from the City, where the *Episcopal* See was, and which the Bishop could not always inspect and oversee in his own person. These were the *Vicarii Episcoporum* (as they are called in *Istodores* Version of the thirteenth *Canon*, both of the *Ancyran* and *Neocaesarean* Council) the Bishops *Deputies*, chosen out of the fittest and gravest persons. In the *Canon* of the last mentioned Council they are said to be chosen in *imitation* of the seventy, not the *seventy* Elders which *Moses* took in to bear part of the Government, (as some have glossed the words of that *Canon*) but of the *seventy* *Disciples* whom our Lord made choice of, to send up and down the Countries to preach the Gospel, as both *Zonaras* and *Balsamon* understand it: and thereupon by reason of their great care and pains are commanded to be esteemed very *honourable*. Their authority was much greater than that of *Presbyters*, and yet much inferior to the *Bishop*. Bishops really they were, though their power

Conc. Anti-  
och. Can.  
10.

**Part I.** power confin'd within narrow limits; they were not allowed to ordain either *Presbyters* or *Deacons*, (unless peculiarly licens'd to it by the Bishop of the *Dio-cess*) though they might ordain *Sub-Deacons*, *Readers* and any inferiour Officers under them. They were to be *assistant* to the Bishop, might be present at *Synods* and *Councils* (to many whereof we find their subscriptions) and had power to give *Letters of peace*, i. e. such

*Ibid. Can. 9.* Letters, whereby the Bishop of one *Dio-cess* was wont to recommend any of his Clergy to the Bishop of another, that so a fair understanding and correspondence might be maintained between them; a privilege expressly denied to any *Presbyter* whatsoever. But lest this wandering employment of the *Chorepiscopi* should reflect any dishonour upon the Episcopal Office, there were certain *Presbyters* appointed in their room (called *μενοδουλαι*, or *Vistlers*, often mention-  
*Sone. Laod. Can. 57.* ed in the ancient *Canons* and *Acts* of *Councils*) who being tied to no certain place were to go up and down the Country, to observe and correct what was amiss. And these doubtless were those *ἐπιχθελιοι προσβύτητες* (spoken of in the thirteenth *Canon* of the *Neocaesarean Council*)

**Part I.** Council) those *rural Presbyters*, who are there forbid to consecrate the *Eucharist* in the *City Church*, in the presence of the *Bishop* or the *Presbyters* of the *City*.

As Christianity encreased and overspread all parts, and especially the *Cities* of the Empire, it was found necessary yet farther to enlarge the Episcopal Office, and as there was commonly a Bishop in every *great City*, so in the *Metropolis* (as the *Romans* called it) the *Mother City* of every *Province* (wherein they had Courts of Civil Judicature) there was an *Archbishop* or a *Metropolitan*, who had Ecclesiastical jurisdiction over all the Churches within that Province. He was superior to all the Bishops within those limits; to him it belonged either to *ordain*, or to *ratify* the elections and ordinations of all the Bishops within his Province, insomuch that without his *confirmation* they were looked upon as null and void. Once at least every year he was to summon the Bishops under him to a *Synod*, to enquire into and direct the Ecclesiastical affairs within that Province; to inspect the lives and manners, the opinions and principles of his Bishops, to *admonish*, reprove, and suspend them that were disorderly and

Q. irregu-

Part 1. irregular; if any controversies or contentions happened between any of them, he was to have the *hearing* and *determination* of them; and indeed no matter of *moment* was done within the whole Province without first consulting him in the case. Besides this *Metropolitan* there was many times another in the same Province, who enjoyed nothing but that name and title, his *Episcopal See* being by the Emperours *Pragmatic* erected into the dignity of a *Metropolis*. He was only an *Honorary Metropolitan*, without any real power and jurisdiction, and had no other privilege, but that he took place above other ordinary Bishops, in all things else equally subject with them to the *Metropolitan* of the Province, as the Council of *Chalcedon* determines in this case. When this Office of *Metropolitan* first began, I find not, only this we are sure of, that the Council of *Nice* settling the just rights and privileges of *Metropolitan Bishops* speaks of them as a thing of *ancient* date, ushering in the *Canon* with an *ἀρχαία ἔθνη νελέτω, let ancient customs still take place*. The original of the *institution* seems to have been partly to comply with peoples occasions, who oft resorted

Can. 12.

Can. 6.

resorted to the *Metropolis* for dispatch of Part 1. their affairs, and so might fitly discharge their *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical* concerns both at once; and partly because of the great confluence of people to that City, that the Bishop of it might have pre-eminence above the rest, and the honour of the *Church* bear some proportion to that of the *State*.

Vid. Conc. Antioch. Can. 9.

After this sprang up another branch of the Episcopal Office, as much superior to that of *Metropolitans*, as theirs was to ordinary Bishops, these were called *Primates* and *Patriarchs*, and had jurisdiction over many Provinces. For the understanding of this it's necessary to know, that when Christianity came to be fully settled in the world, they contrived to model the external Government of the Church, as near as might be to the Civil Government of the *Roman Empire*; the parallel most exactly drawn by an *ingenious* person of our own Nation: the sum of it is this. The whole Empire of *Rome* was divided into *Thirteen Dioceses* (so they called those divisions) these contained about one hundred and twenty *Provinces*, and every Province several *Cities*. Now as in every City there was a *temporal* Magistrate

Edward Breerwood Patriarch. Governm. of the ancient Church. Quest. 1.

Part 1. strate for the executing of justice, and keeping peace both for that City, and the Towns round about it, so was there also a *Bishop* for spiritual order and Government, whose jurisdiction was of like extent and latitude. In every Province there was a *Proconsul* or President, whose seat was usually at the *Metropolis* or chief City of the Province; and hither all inferiour Cities came for judgment in matters of importance. And in proportion to this there was in the same City an *Archbishop* or *Metropolitan* for matters of Ecclesiastical concernment. Lastly, in every *Diocefs* the Emperours had their *Vicarii* or *Lieutenants*, who dwelt in the principal City of the *Diocefs*, where all imperial *Edicts* were published, and from whence they were sent abroad into the several Provinces, and where was the chief *Tribunal*, where all Causes not determinable elsewhere were decided. And to answer this, there was in the same City a *Primate*, to whom the last determination of all appeals from all the Provinces in differences of the *Clergie*, and the Sovereign care of all the *Diocefs* for sundry points of spiritual Government did belong. This in short is the sum of the account which that

learned

learned man gives of this matter. So that Part 1. the *Patriarch* as superiour to *Metropolitans*, was to have under his jurisdiction not any one *single Province*, but a *whole Diocefs* (in the old *Roman* notion of that word) consisting of many *Provinces*. To him belonged the *ordination* of all the *Metropolitans* that were under him, as also the *summoning* them to Councils, the *correcting* and reforming the misdemeanours they were guilty of, and from his judgment and sentence in things properly within his cognizance there lay no appeal. To this I shall only add what *Salmasius* has noted, that as the *Diocefs* *De Primat. c. 19. p. 331* that was governed by the *Vicarius* had many *Provinces* under it, so the *Præfectus Prætorio* had several *Diocefses* under him: and in proportion to this probably it was, that *Patriarchs* were first brought in, who if not superiour to *Primates* in jurisdiction and power, were yet in *honour*, by reason of the dignity of those Cities where their *Sees* were fixed, as at *Rome*, *Constantinople*, *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, and *Jerusalem*, a title and dignity which they retain to this day.

The next Office to Bishops was that of *Presbyters*, to whom it belonged to preach to the people, to administer

baptism

**Part 1.** Baptism, consecrate the Eucharist, and to be assistant to the Bishop both in publick ministrations, and in dispatching the affairs of the Church. The truth is, the *Presbyters* of every great City were a kind of *Ecclesiastical Senate*, under the care and presidency of the Bishop, whose counsel and assistance he made use of in ruling those Societies of Christians that were under his charge and government, and were accordingly reckoned next in place and power to him: thus described by S. Gregory in his *Iambics*.

οἱ ἐκκλησίαν.  
Corm. 23.  
p. 244.  
Tom. 2.

— οἱ τὰ δούτεα  
Θεῶν ἀνελόχοντες,  
Λαὸν πρόεδροι πρεσβύται,  
Σεμνὴ γερυσία.

The venerable Senate of Presbyters, that preside over the people, and possess the second Throne, i. e. the place next to the Bishop: they are called *Clerici superioris loci*, and otherwhiles (unless we understand it of the *Chorepiscopi*) *Antistites in secundo ordine*; and accordingly in Churches had seats of eminency placed for them next to the Bishops Throne. Whereby was implied (says Zonaras) that they ought to use a proportionable care and providence

G. Theod.  
Leg. 11.  
Tit. 39.  
de fid.  
Test. lib. 10.  
Sidon. A.  
poll. lib. 4.  
Epist. 11.  
p. 96.  
In Can. 58.  
Apost.

providence towards the people, to inform and teach them, to direct and guide them, being appointed as *Fellow-labourers* with, and *Assistants* to the Bishop. But though Presbyters by their ordination had a power conferred upon them to administer holy things, yet after that the Church was settled upon foundations of order and regularity, they did not usually exercise this power within any *Diocese*, without leave and authority from the Bishop, much less take upon them to preach in his presence. This custom (however it might be otherwise in the Eastern Church) we are sure was constantly observed in the Churches of *Afric* till the time of *Valerius*, S. Augustine's Predecessor in the See of Hippo. Who being a Greek, and by reason of his little skill in the *Latine* tongue, unable to preach to the edification of the people, admitted S. Augustine (whom he had lately ordained Presbyter) to preach before him. Which though at first 'twas ill resented by some Bishops in those parts, yet quickly became a president for other Churches to follow after.

After these came **Deacons**: What the duty of their place was appears from their primitive election, the Apostles

Part I. setting them apart to *serve* or *minister* to the Tables, i. e. to attend upon and take charge of those daily *provisions* that were made for poor indigent Christians; but certainly it implies also their being destined to a peculiar attendance at the service of the *Lords Table*. And both these may be very well meant in that place, it being the custom of Christians then to meet every day at the *Lords Table*, where they made their offerings for the poor, and when poor and rich had their meales together. And hence it was ever accounted part of the *Deacons* Office, as to take care of the poor, and to distribute the monies given for their relief and maintenance, so to wait upon the celebration of the *Eucharist*, which being consecrated by the Bishop or *Presbyter*, the *Deacon* delivered the Sacramental elements to the people. Besides this they were wont also to *preach* and to *baptize*, and were employed in many parts of the publick Service, especially in guiding and directing of the people. The number of them in any one place was usually restrained to *seven*, this being the number originally instituted by the *Apostles*, and which might not be altered, although the City was never

never so great and numerous, as 'tis in Part I: the last *Canon* of the *Neocaesarean Council*. As the *Presbyters* were to the *Bishop*, so the *Deacons* were to the *Presbyters*, to be assistant to them, and to give them all due respect and reverence. And therefore when some of them began to take too much upon them to distribute the Sacrament before the Bishop or *Presbyter*, and to take place amongst the *Presbyters*, the Council of *Nice* took notice of it as a piece of bold and saucy *Can. 18.* usurpation, severely commanded them to know their place, and to contain themselves within their own *bounds* and *measures*, and neither to meddle with the Sacrament but in their order, nor to *sit down* before the *Presbyters*, unless it be by their leave and command, as 'tis expressed by the *Laodicean Synod*. *Can. 20.* Accordingly the first Council of *Arles* forbids the *Deacons* to do any thing of themselves, but to reserve the honour *Can. 18.* to the *Presbyters*. Out of the body of these *Deacons* there was usually one chosen to overlook the rest, the *Arch-Deacon*; an Office supposed to have been of good antiquity in the Church, and of great authority, especially in after times, being generally styled the *Eye of the Bishop*,

Part 1. *Bishop*, to inspect all parts and places of his Diocess. This was he that in the Church of *Rome* was called the *Cardinal Deacon*, who (as *Onuphrins* tell us) was at first but one, though the number encreased afterwards. While Churches were little, and the services not many, the Deacons themselves were able to discharge them, but as these encreased so did their labours, and therefore 'twas thought fit to take in some inferiour Officers under them. This gave being to

*De Episc.  
Tit & Dia-  
con. Car.  
din. p. 24.*

*Conc. Lao-  
dic. Can. 43  
ubi vid.  
Zon & Bal-  
sam.*

*Inter Epist.  
Cyprian. Epist.  
2. p. 8.  
Epist. 28.  
p. 41.*

*Subdeacons*, who were to be assistent to the *Deacon*, as the *Deacon* to the *Presbyter*, and he to the *Bishop*. One great part of his work was to wait at the *Church-doors* in the time of publick Worship, to usher in, and to bring out the several Orders of the *Catechumens* and *Penitents*, that none might mistake their proper stations, and that no confusion or disorder might arise to the disturbance of the Congregation. When he was first taken in, I cannot find, but he is mentioned in an Epistle of the *Roman Clergie* to them of *Carthage* about *S. Cyprians* retirement, and elsewhere very often in *Cyprian's* Epistles. Where he also speaks of the *Acolythus*; what his proper business was, is not so certain; by

by some his Office is said to have been Part 1. this, to *Follow* (as the world implies) or to go along with the Bishop in the quality of an *honourable* attendant, to be ready at hand to minister to him, and to be a companion and witness of his honest and unblameable conversation, in case any evil fame should arise, that might endeavour to blast his reputation. But by others he is said to have been a *Taper-bearer* to carry the *Lights*, which were set up at the reading of the *Gospel*. And this seems to be clear from the fourth Council of *Carthage*, where at his ordination he is appointed to receive at the *Archdeacons* hand a *Candlestick* with a *Taper*, that he may know 'tis the duty of his place, to light up the *Lights* in the Church. This might very well be in those times; but 'tis certain the Office of *Acolythus* was in use long before that custom of setting up Lights at the reading of the Gospel was brought into the Church. By *Cyprian* also is mentioned the Office of the *Exorcist*, whose business was to attend the *Catechumens* and the *Energumeni*, or such as were possessed of the Devil. For after the miraculous power of casting out Devils began to cease, or at least not to be so common as it was, these

Can. 6.

Epist. 16. p. 29. & 146.



Part 1. these possessed persons used to come to the *out-parts* of the Church, where a person was appointed to *exorcise* them, *i. e.* to pray over them in such prayers as were peculiarly composed for those occasions, and this he did in the publick name of the whole Church, the people also at the same time praying within; by which means the possessed person was delivered from the tyranny of the evil spirit; without any such *charms* and *conjurations*, and other *unchristian* forms and rites, which by degrees crept into this Office, and are at this day in use in the Church of *Rome*. Besides, to the *Exorcists* Office it belonged to instruct the *Catechumens*, and to train them up in the first principles of the Christian Faith: in which sense the *Exorcist* is by *Harmenopolus* explained by *Catechist*, and to *exorcise* (says *Balsamon*) is *ναλεγειν ανητους*, to instruct unbelievers.

*Epist. Can.*  
*ss. 1. Tit 9.*  
*Jur. Grac.*  
*Rom. p. 16.*  
*In Can. 26.*  
*Conc. Laod.*

Next to the *Exorcist* was the *Lector* or *Reader* (mentioned frequently by *S. Cyprian*) whose business was to stand near the *Ambo* or *Pulpit*, and to read those portions of holy Scripture which were appointed to be read as principal parts of the Divine Service. This Office *Julian* (who was afterwards *Emperour*) when

when a young Student at *Nicomedia* Part 1. took upon him, and became a *Reader* in that Church, which he did only to blind his Cousin *Constantius*, who began to suspect him as inclining to *Paganism*, to which he openly revolted afterwards, and became a bitter and virulent enemy to Christians, making an ill use of those Scriptures, which he had once *privately* studied and *publickly* read to the people. I know not whether it may be worth the while to take notice of the *Ostiarii* or *Door-keepers*, answerable to the *Nethinims* in the *Jewish* Church, who were to attend the Church Doors at times of publick meetings, to keep out notorious *Hereticks*, *Jewes*, and *Gentiles* from entering into the Christian Assemblies: it doubtless took its rise in the times of persecutions, Christians then being forc'd to keep their meetings as private and clancular as they could, and to guard their Assemblies with all possible diligence, lest some *Jew* or *Infidel* stealing in, should have gone and accused them before the Magistrate. What other Officers there were (or whether any at all) in those times in and about the Church, will not be worth our labour to enquire.

*Socrat. H.*  
*Eccl. lib. 3.*  
*c. 1. p. 166.*

To

Part 1. To these Offices they were set apart by solemn rites of *prayer* and *imposition of hands*; a ceremony (so far as *χειροτονία* is strictly taken for *lifting up* the hand in *suffrage*) commonly used at *Athens*, and some of the *States of Greece* in the designing and electing persons to be publick Magistrates. But more particularly in use amongst the *Jews*, and from them doubtless (as many other of the *Synagogue-rites*) transferred into the *Christian Church*, and there constantly used both as to the *lifting up* and *laying on* the hands, as the rite of conferring ordination upon the Ministers of *Christ*. Only it is here to be remembred, that there was a *double imposition* of hands, in setting apart Ecclesiastical Officers: the one was *καθίστησις*, or by way of *consecration*, and this was the proper way of ordaining the first rank of Officers, *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*: the other *ευχολογία*, by way of *blessing*, hands being laid upon them only as in the absolution of Penitents by way of solemn *benediction*, and thus the inferiour Officers, *Subdeacons*, *Readers*, &c. and *Deaconesses* were set apart: All orders under Bishops were ordained by the Bishop, the Bishop himself by all the Bishops of that *Province*, who

who used to meet together for that purpose, if nearness of place and other conveniencies would allow; otherwise *three* (and in cases of necessity *two*) might do it; the rest testifying their consent in writing, and the person thus ordained was to be confirmed by the *Metropolitan* of that Province. And whereas the Council of *Antioch* provides, that no Bishop shall be ordained without the *Metropolitan* being present, it is to be understood (as *Balsamon* tells us) of his leave and permission, or his appointing it to be so. For the ordination of the rest of the Clergy, *Priests*, *Deacons*, &c. the act and presence of one Bishop might suffice: and as no more than one was required, so one at least was necessary, the power of conferring *order*, being even by those who otherwise have had no mighty kindness for Episcopacy, acknowledged an unquestionable *right* of the Episcopal Office. Insomuch that in the case of *Athanasius* it was a just exception against *Ischyrras*, that he had been ordained by *Colythus*, who was no higher than a Presbyter, and consequently his ordination by the Council was adjudged null and void.

At all ordinations, especially of superiour

Part 1.  
Conc. Nicen. Can. 4.

Can. 19.

Athanas.  
Apol. 2. do  
fug. sua.  
p. 570.  
Tom. 1.

Part I. rior Officers, the *people* of the place were always present, and ratified the action with their approbation and consent. And indeed it cannot be denied but that the people in some places especially, were very much considered in this affair, it being seldom or never done without their *presence* and *suffrage*. To this end the Bishop was wont before every ordination to *propound* and *publish* the names of those who were to have holy Orders conferred upon them, that so the people who best knew their lives and conversations, might interpose, if they had any thing material to object against it. By which means the *unworthy* were discovered and rejected, the *deserving* honoured and admitted, the ordination became legitimate and satisfactory, having past the common vote and suffrage, without any exception made against it, as *Cyprian* speaks. Hence the *Clergie* of what order soever were said *Prædicari*, to be *propounded* or published: And this way seemed so fit and reasonable, that *Severus* the *Emperour* (a wise and prudent Prince) in imitation of the *Christians* established it in the disposal of Civil Offices. For when he had a mind to send out any Governours of Provinces,

*Vid. Constit. App. lib. 8. c. 4. p. 1004.*

*Cyprian. Epist. 68. p. 113. 114.*

*Lamprid. in vit. A. lex. Sev. c. 45. p. 570.*

or

or to appoint *Receivers* of his *Revenues*, he propounded the names of those he intended, desiring the people to except against the persons, if they knew them guilty of any crimes which they were able to make good against them: *affirming it to be unfit* (says his own *Historian*) *that when the Christians and Jews did it in publishing those who were to be ordained their Priests and Ministers, the same should not be observed in the election of Governours of Provinces, who had the lives and fortunes of men committed to them.* When the case so hapned that the ordination was more remote or private, they were then required to bring sufficient *testimonials*; thus *Cyprian* when ordaining *Saturus* and *Optatus* to be *Receivers*, we examined, says he, whether the *Testimonials* agreed to them, which they ought to have, who are admitted into the Clergy.

And indeed they proceeded in this affair with all imaginable care and prudence; they examined mens fitness for the place to which they were set apart, enquired severely what had been the course and manner of their life, how they had carried themselves in their youth, and whether they had governed

R it

*Basil. Epist. 181 p. 194 T. m. 3.*

*Epist. 24. p. 35.*

Part 1. it by the strict rules of piety. This ancient custom (as S. Basil calls it) was ratified by the Nicene Council, declaring that none should be ordained Presbyter without previous examination, especially a strict enquiry into his life and manners. For the Apostolick Church (says Joseph the Egyptian in his Arabick Paraphrase of that Canon) admits none in this case, but him that is of great innocency and an unspotted life, free from those crimes and enormities, which he there particularly reckons up. They suffered not men in those days to leap into Ecclesiastical Orders, but by the usual steps, and staying the appointed times. Cyprian commends Cornelius Bishop of Rome, that he did not skip into the Chair, but passed through all the Ecclesiastical Offices, ascending through all the degrees of Religion, till he came *ad sacerdotii sublime fastigium*, to the top of the highest order. A thing expressly provided for by the Synod of Sardis, that no man though never so rich, though furnished with never so good a knack of speech and oratory, should yet be made Bishop before he had passed through the preceding Orders of Reader, Subdeacon, Deacon, and Presbyter, that having been found

Ad Antoni.  
an. Epist.  
52. p. 67.

Can. 10.

found fit in each of these, he might step Part 1.  
by step ascend up to the Episcopal Chair: and that he should spend some considerable time in each of these degrees, that so his faith, and the innocency and excellency of his life, his constancy and moderation might be made known to all, and his fitness for that sacred function being made apparent might procure him the greater honour and reverence from others. Men were then forced to stay their full time before they could be promoted to any higher Order; they did not commence Divines and Bishops in a day (*ἐνθήμερον ἀγίου καὶ θεο- Orat. 1. de  
λδίου*, as Nazianzen elegantly calls them) Theol. p.  
like some he complains of in his time, 535 Or in  
who were not polished by time and study, but fitted and made Bishops all at land. Bas.  
once; whom therefore he wittily compares to the Dragons teeth, which the Or. 20. p.  
Fable tells us Cadmus sowed at Thebes, 335.  
which immediately sprung up Giants out of the earth, arm'd Cap-a-pe, perfect men and perfect Warriours in one day: and just such, says he, were some Prelates, consecrated, made wise and learned in one day, who yet understood nothing before, nor brought any thing to the Order, but only a good will to be there.

Part 1. For the Age of the persons that were to be ordained, they usually observed the *Apostolick Canon*, *not to chuse a Novice*, but of an age competent to that Office, that he was chosen to; though it varied according to times and persons, and the occasions of the Church. For that of *Bishops*, I find not any certain age positively set down. *Photius* in his *Nomocanon* speaks of an *Imperial* constitution that requires a Bishop not to be under *thirty five*: but the *Apostolical Constitutions* allow not a man to be made a Bishop under *fifty* years of age, as having then passed all *juvenile* petulancies and disorders. 'Tis certain they were not generally (some extraordinary instances alter not the case) promoted to that Office, till they were of a considerable age, and thence frequently stiled *majores natu* in the Writings of the Church. *Presbyters* were commonly made at *thirty*; yea the Council of *Neocæsarea* decreed, that no man though otherwise of never so unquestionable a conversation, should be ordained *Presbyter* before that age; the reason whereof they give, because *Christ* himself was not *baptized*, nor began to *preach* till the thirtieth year of his age. The Council of *Agde* requires the

Thl. d.  
κεφ. κii.  
p. 20.

Lib. 2. c. 1.  
p. 824.

Can. 11.

Conc. Aga.  
Can. 17.

the same age, but assigns another reason, Part 1. not before thirty years of age, because then, *say they*, he comes to the age of a *perfect man*. *Deacons* were made at *twenty five*, and the like distance and proportion observed for the inferiour Officers under them. I take no notice in this place of *Monks*, *Hermits*, &c. partly because, although they were under a kind of *Ecclesiastical* relation, by reason of their more than ordinarily strict and severe profession of Religion, yet were they not usually in *holy Orders*; and partly because *Monachism* was of no very early standing in the Church, beginning probably about the times of the latter persecutions; and even then too *Monks* were quite another thing, both in *profession*, *habit*, and *way of life*, from what they are at this day, as will abundantly appear to him that will take the pains to compare the account which *S. Hierom*, *Augustine*, *Palladius*, *Cassian*, and others give of those *primitive Monks*, with the several *Orders* in the Church of *Rome* at this day.

I shall only add, that out of the *Monks* persons were usually made choice of to be advanced into the *Clergie*, as is evident not only from multitudes of in-

Part 1. stances in the Writers of the fourth, and following Centuries, but from an express Law of the Emperour *Arcadius* to that purpose: the strictness of their lives, and the purity of their manners more immediately qualifying them for those holy Offices; infomuch that many times they were advanced unto the Episcopal Chair, without going through the usual intermediate Orders of the Church: several instances whereof (*Scrapion, Apollonius, Agatho, Aristo*, and some others) *Athanasius* reckons up in his Epistle to *Dracontius*, who being a *Monk* refused a *Bishoprick* to which he was chosen. But because we meet in the ancient Writings of the Church with very frequent mention of persons of another Sex, *Deaconesses*, who were employed in many Offices of Religion, it may not be amiss in this place to give some short account of them. Their original was very early, and of equal standing with the infancy of the Church; such was *Phoebe* in the Church of *Cenchrea*, mentioned by *S. Paul*; such were those two *Servant-maids* spoken of by *Pliny* in his Letter to the Emperour, whom he examined upon the Rack; such was the famous *Olympias* in the Church of *Constantinople*, not to mention

*Cod. Theod.*  
*lib. 16 Tit.*  
*2. de Epis.*  
*copis, &c.*  
*2.*

*Tom. 1.*  
*p. 738.*

mention any more particular instances. Part 1. They were either *Widows*, and then not to be taken into the service of the Church under *threescore* years of age, according to *S. Paul's* direction; or else *Virgins*, who having been educated in order to it, and given testimony of a chaste and sober conversation, were set apart at *forty*: what the proper place and ministry of these *Deaconesses* was in the ancient Church, though *Matthew Blasters* seems to render a little doubtful, yet certainly it principally consisted in such offices as these; to attend upon the Women at times of Publick Worship, especially in the administration of Baptism, that when they were to be divested in order to their *immersion*, they might *overshadow* them, so as nothing of indecency and uncomeliness might appear; sometimes they were employed in *instructing* the more rude and ignorant sort of women, in the plain and easie principles of *Christianity*, and in preparing them for *Baptism*; otherwhiles in *visiting* and attending upon Women that were sick, in *conveying* messages, counsels, consolations, relief (especially in times of persecution, when it was dangerous for the *Officers* of the Church) to the

*Syntagma*  
*c. 11. lit. T.*  
*p. 71.*  
*Epiph. Ha.*  
*res. 79. p.*  
*447.*

*Cl. Alex.*  
*from lib 3.*  
*p. 448. Con-*  
*cil 4. Car-*  
*thag. Can.*  
*12.*

Part 1. the *Martyrs* and them that were in Prison; and of these women no doubt it was that *Libanius* speaks of amongst the Christians, who were so very ready to be employed in these offices of *humanity*. But to return.

Orat. de  
vinclis.  
p. 56.

Persons being thus set apart for holy Offices, the Christians of those days discovered no less piety in that mighty respect and reverence which they paid to them; that the Ministers of Religion should be peculiarly *honoured* and regarded, seems to have been accounted a piece of natural *justice* by the common sentiments of mankind; the most barbarous and unpolished Nations that ever had a value for any thing of Religion, have always had a proportionable regard to them, to whom the care and administration of it did belong. *Julian* the *Emperour* expressly pleads for it as the most reasonable thing in the world, that *Priests* should be honoured, yea in some respects *above* civil Magistrates, as being the immediate attendants and *domestick* servants of God, our *intercessors* with Heaven, and the means of deriving down great blessings from God upon us. But never was this clearer demonstrated than in the practice of the primitive

Julian.  
fragm.  
Oper. p. 1.  
p. 542.

primitive Christians, who carried them- Part 1.  
selves towards their *Bishops* and *Ministers*, with all that kindness and veneration which they were capable to express towards them. *S. Paul* bears record to the *Galatians*, that he was accounted so dear to them, that if the *plucking out their eyes* would have done him any good, they were ready to have done it for his sake; and *S. Clement* testifies of the *Corinthians*, that they walked in the Laws of God, being subject to them that had the *rule over them*; yielding also due honour to the seniors or *elder* persons that were amongst them. That by *ἡγούμενοι* in this place he should mean *Civil Magistrates* (as some have told us) I can hardly be persuaded, both because 'tis the *same* word that's used by the Author to the *Hebrews* obey τοῖς ἡγούμενοις *ὑμῶν* them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves (and indeed both *Eusebius* and *S. Hierom* of old observed such a mighty affinity in the phrase between this and the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, as certainly to conclude *S. Clements* to have been, if not the *Author*, at least the *Translator* of that Epistle) and also because the sole occasion of *S. Clements* writing this Epistle was a mutiny which they had

Gal. 4. 15.

pag. 2.

Heb. 13. 17  
H. Eccl. lib.  
3. c. 38. p.  
110. de  
Script. Ec-  
chin Clem.

**Part I.** had made against their *spiritual* Guides and Governours, and therefore according to the right art of *Orators*, he first commends them for their eminent subjection to them, that he might with the more advantage reprove and censure them for their schism afterwards, which he does severely in the latter part of the Epistle, and towards the end of it exhorts those who had laid the foundation of the Sedition, to become subject to their Presbyters; and being instructed to repentance, to bow the knees of their hearts, to lay aside the *arrogant* and *insolent* boldness of their tongues, and to learn to subject and submit themselves. The truth is Bishops and Ministers were then looked upon as the common *Parents* of Christians, whom as such they honoured and obeyed, and to whom they repaired for counsel and direction in all important cases. 'Tis plain from several passages in *Tertullian*, that none could lawfully *marry* till they had first advised with the Bishop and Clergy of the Church, and had asked and obtained their leave; which probably they did to secure the person from marrying with a *Gentile*, or any of them that were without, and from the inconveniencies that

*Vid. Constit. Apost. lib. 2. c. 33. p. 859.*

*De monogamia. c. 11. p. 531. Ad Uxor. l. 2. c. 2. 9.*

*Vid. de Conv. mil. c. 13. p. 139.*

that might ensue upon such a match. No **Part I.** respect, no submission was thought great enough, whereby they might do honour to them, they were wont to *kiss* *Vid. Chrysost. de S. Mel. An. tioc. Hom. 45. tom. 1. p. 526. & Annot. p. 91* their hands, to *embrace* their feet, and at their going from, or returning home, or indeed their coming unto any place, to wait upon them, and either to receive or dismiss them with the universal confluence of the people. Happy they thought themselves if they could but entertain them in their houses, and bless their roofs with such welcome guests. Amongst the various ways of kindness *De vit. Constant. lib. 1. c. 42. p. 429.* which *Constantine* the Great shewed to the *Clergie*, the *Writer* of his life tells us, that he used to treat them at his own *Table*, though in the meanest and most despicable habit, and never went a *journey*, but he took some of them along with him, reckoning that thereby he made himself surer of the propitious and favourable influence of the divine presence. What honours he did them at the Council of *Nice*, where he refused *Lib. 3.* to sit down, till they had given him intimation, with what magnificent gifts and entertainments he treated them afterwards, the same Author relates at large. The truth is, the piety of that devout



Part 1. devout and excellent Prince thought nothing too good for those who were the messengers of God, and ministers of holy things, and so infinitely tender was he of their honour, as to profess, that if at any time he should spy a *Bishop* overtaken in an immodest and uncomely action, he would cover him with his own *imperial Robe*, rather than others should take notice of it, to the scandal of his place and person. And because their *spiritual* authority and relation might not be sufficient to secure them from the contempt of rude and prophane persons, therefore the first Christian Emperours invested them with power even in *Civil* cases, as the way to beget them respect and authority amongst the people. Thus *Constantine*, (as *Sozomon* tells us, and he sets it down as a great argument of that Princes reverence for Religion) ordained, that persons contending in Law, might if they pleased remove their cause out of the *Civil* Courts, and appeal to the *judgment* of the Bishops, whose sentence should be *firm*, and take place before that of any other Judges, as if it had been immediately passed by the Emperour himself; and cases thus judged by

*Bishops,*

*Theodor.  
Hist. Eccl.  
lib. 1. c. 11.*

*H. Eccles.  
lib. 1. c. 9.  
p. 413.*

*Bishops*, all Governours of Provinces and their Officers were presently to put into execution; which was afterwards ratified by two Laws, one of *Arcadius*, another of *Honorius* to that purpose. This power the Bishops sometimes *delegated* to their inferior Clergy, making them Judges in these cases, as appears from what *Socrates* reports of *Silvanus* Bishop of *Troas*, that finding a *male-administration* of this power, he took it out of the hands of his *Clergie*, and devolved the hearing and determining causes over to the *Laity*. And to name no more, *S. Augustine* more than once and again tells us, how much he was crowded and even oppressed in deciding the contests and causes of secular persons. It seems they thought themselves happy in those days, if they could have their causes heard and determined by *Bishops*.

A pious Bishop, and a faithful Minister was in those days dearer to them than the most valuable blessings upon earth, and they could want any thing rather than be without them; when *Chrysostom* was driven by the *Empress* into banishment, the people as he went along burst into tears, and cryed out, *'twas better the Sun should not shine, than that John Chrysostom*

*C. Tit. 4. de  
Episc. Audi-  
ent. ll. 7.  
8.*

*M. Eccles.  
lib. 7. c. 37.  
p. 383.*

*Epist. 147.  
col. 683.  
vid. Epist.  
Nebri. ad  
Aug. Ep.  
114. & a-  
libi passim.*

*Chrysost.  
Ep. 125.  
tom. 4. p.  
763.*

Part I. Iostom *should not preach*; and when through the importunity of the people he was recalled from his former banishment and diverted into the *Suburbs* till he might have an opportunity to make a publick vindication of his innocency, the people not enduring such delays, the Emperour was forced to send for him into the City; the people universally meeting him, and conducting him to his Church, with all expressions of reverence and veneration. Nay while he was yet *Presbyter* of the Church of *Antioch*, so highly was he loved and honoured by the people of that place, that though he was chosen to the *See* of *Constantinople*, and sent for by the Emperours Letters, though their Bishop made an Oration on purpose to perswade them to it, yet would they by no means be brought to part with him; and when the Messengers by force attempted to bring him away, he was forced to prevent a tumult, to withdraw and hide himself; the people keeping a Guard about him, lest he should be taken from them: nor could the Emperour or his Agents with all their arts effect it, till he used this wile, he secretly wrote to the Governour of *Antioch*, who pre-

tending

Socrat.  
Hist. Ecol.  
lib. 6. c. 16.  
p. 324.

Meta-  
phrast. in  
vit. Chrys-  
tomi apud  
Surius ad  
diem 27.  
Jan. tom. I.

tending to *Chrysostom*, that he had concerns of moment to impart to him, invited him to a private place without the City, where seizing upon him, by Mules which he had in readiness, he conveyed him to *Constantinople*; where that his welcome might be the more magnificent, the Emperour commanded that all persons of eminency, both *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil*, should with all possible pomp and state go *six miles* to meet him. Of *Nazianzen* (who sat in the same Chair of *Constantinople* before him) I find, that when he would have left that Bishoprick by reason of the stirrs that were about it, and delivered up himself to solitude and a private life, as a thing much more suitable to his humour and *genius*, many of the people came about him, with tears beseeching him not to forsake his Flock, which he had hitherto fed with so much sweat and labour. They could not then lose their spiritual Guides, but they looked upon themselves as *Widows* and *Orphans*, resenting their death with a general sorrow and lamentation, as if they had lost a *common Father*. *Nazianzen* reports, that when his *Father* (who was Bishop of but a little *Diocest*) lay very sick, and all other remedies proved

unsuc-

Greg.  
Presb. de  
vit. Gre-  
gor. Nazi-  
an. prefat.  
oper. Naz.

In laud.  
patr. Or. 19  
p. 304.



Part 1. Bishops, which privilege was extended by *Honorius* to all the *Clergie*, that they should be tryed before their Bishops; before whom also he ordained, that all causes properly belonging to Religion should be brought, and be determined by them; and by another *constitution*, that for the veneration that is due to the Church, all Ecclesiastical causes should be decided with all possible speed. And to name no more, that the persons of Ministers might be secured from foreign attempts, he and his Colleague *Arcadius* made a Law, that whosoever did offer any *violence* to them, should upon conviction or confession of the fact be punished with *death*; and that the ministers of Civil justice should not stay till the Bishop complained of the injury that was done (it being probable that he would rather incline to *mercy* and *forgiveness*) but that every one in this case should be admitted and encouraged to prefer and prosecute the charge: and in case the rude multitude should by arms or otherwise obstruct execution, and that the powers of that place could not see it done, that then they should call in the assistance of the Governour of the Province, to see Justice put into execution.

*Ib Tit. 11.  
l. 1.*

*Ib. lib. 2.  
Tit. 4 l. 7.*

*Lib. 16. Tit.  
2. l. 31.*

tion. And because next to his *person* nothing is so dear to a *Clergie-man* as his *credit* and reputation, therefore the Em- perour *Honorius* took care by a Law, that whosoever (be he a person of the *highest* rank) should charge any *Clergie-man* with Crimes which he was not able to make good, he himself should be publickly accounted vile and infamous, it being but just and equal (*says the Law*) that as guilt should be punished, and offenders reckoned as spots and blemishes to the Church, so that injured innocency should be righted and maintained. How infinitely tender the first general Council of *Constantinople* was in this case, to secure the honour and good name of *Bishops* and *Clergie-men*, against the malicious insinuations and charges of false accusers, may appear by the large provision which they make about it in the *sixth Canon* of that Council; and because it sometimes so happens, that a mans enemies are those of his own house, therefore the *Apostolical Canons* ordain, that if any Clergy-man reproach and de- fame a Bishop, he shall be deposed from his Ministry; for *thou mayest not* (*says the Canon*) *speak evil of the Ruler of thy people*; but if it be a *Presbyter* or *Deacon*,

Part 1.  
*Ibid. l. 41.*

*Can. 55.*

Part 1. whom he thus reproaches, he shall be suspended from the execution of his Office. So sacred and venerable did they then account the persons and concerns of those who ministred in the affairs of Divine Worship.

## CHAP. IX.

Of their usual Worship, both private and publick.

*The Christians worship of God in their Families discovered. Their usual times of prayer. Praying before and after meals. Singing of Psalms, and reading the Scriptures at the same time. Frequency in prayer noted in divers instances. Their great reverence for the holy Scriptures, in reading, expounding, committing them to memory. Several instances of it. Their care in instructing their Families in divine things. Singing of Psalms mixed with their usual labours. An account of their publick Worship. The order of the Service in their Assemblies. Prayer: Reading the Scriptures: Two Lessons out of each Testament. Clemens*

*mens his Epistle, and the Writings of Part 1. other pious men read in the Church. Singing a part of the publick Service. How ancient: What those Hymns were. The Sermon or discourse, upon what subject usually. Such discourses called Tractatus; and why. More Sermons than one at the same time. Sermons preached in the afternoon as well as in the morning. The mighty concourse and confluence of people to these publick Solemnities. The departure of the Catechumens, Penitents, &c. The Missa Catechumenorum, what. The Missa Fidelium. The word missa or masse, whence, and how used in the Writers of those times. The singular reverence they shewed in these Duties. Great modesty and humility. Praying with hands lift up in the form of a Cross, why. They prayed either kneeling or standing. Sitting in prayer noted as a posture of great irreverence. Praying towards the East. The universality of this Custom. The reasons of it enquired into. Their reverence in hearing Gods Word. The people generally stood. Standing up at the Gospels. The remarkable piety and devotion of Constantine the Great. No departing the Congregation till the blessing was given.*

## Part I.

**T**HUS far we have discovered the piety of those ancient times, as to those necessary *circumstances* that relate to the Worship of God, we are next to see wherein their *Worship* it self did consist, which we shall consider both as *private* and *publick*, that which they performed at home, and that which was done in their solemn and *Church-Assemblies*, only let it be remembred, that under the notion of Worship I here comprehend all those duties of *piety* that refer to God: the duties of their *private* worship were of two sorts, either such as were more *solemn* and stated, and concerned the whole Family, or such as persons discharged *alone*, or at least did not tie up themselves to usual times: For the first, which are properly *Family duties*, they were usually performed in this order; at their first rising in the morning, they were wont to meet together, and to betake themselves to *prayer* (as is plainly implied in *Chrysostom's* exhortation) to praise God for the protection and refreshment of the night, and to beg his grace and blessing for the following day: this was done by the *Master* of the house, unless some

*Hom. 1. de precat. iom. s. p. 750. vid. Basil. Ep. ad Greg. de vit. solit. tom. 3. p. 43. A.*

*Minister*

*Minister* of Religion were present: 'tis *Part I.* probable that at this time they recited the *Creed*, or some confession of their Faith, by which they professed themselves *Christians*, and as 'twere armed themselves against the assaults of dangers and temptations; however I question not, but that now they read some parts of *Scripture*, which they were most ready to do at all times, and therefore certainly would not omit it now. That they had their *set hours* for prayer, the *third*, *sixth* and *ninth* hour, is plain *De Orat. dom. p. 196 Strom. lib. 7. p. 722.* both from *Cyprian*, *Clem. Alexandrinus*, and others: this they borrowed from the *Jews*, who divided the day into four *greater hours*, the *first*, *third*, *sixth*, and *ninth* hour, three last whereof were stated hours of prayer; the first hour began at six in the morning, and held till nine; the third from nine till twelve; and at this hour it was that the *Apostles* and *Christians* were met together, when the *Holy Ghost* descended upon them; the sixth hour was from twelve till three in the *afternoon*, and at this time *Peter went up to the house top to pray*; the ninth was from three till six at night, and now it was that *Peter* and *John* went up to the Temple, *it being the ninth hour of*

S 4

*prayer;*

Part I. *prayer*; this division was observed by the *Christians* of succeeding times, though whether punctually kept to in their *Family devotions* I am not able to affirm. About *noon* before their going to dinner some portions of *Scripture* were read, and the meat being set upon the Table, a  *blessing* was solemnly begged of God, as the fountain of all blessings (and so religious herein was the good Emperor *Theodosius junior*, that he would never taste any meat, no not so much as a Fig, or any other Fruit, before he had first given thanks to the great *Sovereign Creator*) and both meat and drink set apart with the *sign* of the *Cross* (a custom they used in the most common actions of life) as is expressly affirmed both by *Tertullian* and *Origen*, where he also gives a form of such prayers as they were wont to use before meals, *viz.* that lifting up their eyes to Heaven, they prayed thus, *Thou that givest food to all flesh, grant that we may receive this food with thy blessing; thou Lord hast said, that if we drink any thing that is deadly, if we call upon thy name it shall not hurt us, thou therefore who art Lord of all power and glory, turn away all evil and malignant quality from our food, and*  
*what*

*Clem. Alex.*  
*strom. lib. 7.*  
*p. 728.*

*Tert. Apol.*  
*c. 39. p. 32.*

*Sozom.*  
*prafat. ad.*  
*Hist. Eccl.*  
*p. 395.*

*De Cor.*  
*mil. c. 3.*  
*p. 102 lib.*  
*2. in Job*  
*fol. 36. col.*  
*2. tom. 2.*

*what ever pernicious influence it may have* Part I.  
*upon us*; when they were at dinner, they  
 sung *Hymns* and *Psalms*; a practice which  
*Clem. Alexandrinus* commends as very *Padag. lib.*  
 suitable to *Christians*, as a modest and *2. c. 4. p.*  
 decent way of praising God, while we *165.*  
 are partaking of his Creatures. *Chryso-* *In Psalm.*  
*stom* greatly pleads for it, that men *41. tom. 3.*  
 should be careful to teach them their *p. 147.*  
 Wives and Children, and which they  
 should use even at their *ordinary* works,  
 but especially at *meals*, such divine Songs  
 being an excellent *antidote* against temp-  
 tations; for (*says he*) as the Devil is  
 never more ready to ensnare us than at  
*meals*, either by *intemperance*, *ease*, or  
 immoderate *mirth*, therefore both be-  
 fore and at *meals* we should fortifie our  
 selves with *Psalms*, nay and when we  
 rise from the Table with our Wives and  
 Children, we should again sing *Hymns*  
 to God. They used also to have the *Cypr. Epist.*  
*Scriptures* read, and as I have elsewhere *i. p. 7.*  
 noted out of *Nazianzen*, every time they *Clem. Alex.*  
 took the *Cup* to drink, made the sign of *ut supra.*  
 the *Cross* and called upon *Christ*. Dinner  
 being ended, they concluded with *prayer*, *Basil. Ep.*  
 giving thanks to God for their present *ad Greg.*  
 refreshment, and begging his continued *tom 3. p. 46*  
 provision of those good things which he  
 had

Part I. had promised to them. So great a place had *Religion* in those days even in mens common and natural actions, and so careful were they not to *starve* the soul, while they were *feeding* of the body: Much after the same rate they spent the rest of the day, till the night approached, when before their going to rest, the Family was again called to *prayer*, after which they went to bed; about *mid-*  
*Clem Alex. padag. lib. 2. c. 9. p. 185.* *night* they were generally wont to rise to *pray* and to sing *hymns* to God; this custom was very ancient, and doubtless took its original from the first times of persecution, when not daring to meet together in the *day*, they were forced to keep their religious Assemblies in the *night*; and though this was afterwards antiquated, as being found inconvenient for the generality of *Christians*, yet did it still continue in the *nocturnal* hours of *Monasteries* and religious *Orders*.

But besides these stated and ordinary devotions, performed by a joint concurrence of the Family, the Christians of those days were careful to spend all the time they could even when alone in actions of piety and religion: they were most frequent in *prayer*; *Eusebius* reports of *S. James* the *just*, that he was wont every

*Hist. Eccl. lib 2. c 23. p 63. ex Hegesipp.*

every day to go alone into the Church, Part I. and there *kneeling* upon the pavement so long to pour out his prayers to God, till his knees became as *hard* and *brawny* as a *Camels*; the same which *Nazianzen* also tells us of his good Sister *Gorgonia*, that by often praying her knees were become hard, and did as 'twere stick to the ground. *Constantine* the Great though burdened with the cares of so vast an Empire, did yet every day at his wonted hours withdraw from all the company of the *Court*, retire into his *Closet*, and upon his knees offer up his prayers to God; and to let the world know how much he was devoted to this duty, he caused his *Image* in all his Gold *Coins*, in his *Pictures* and *Statues* to be represented in the posture of a *person praying*, with his hands spread abroad, and his eyes lift up to Heaven. Their next care was diligently and seriously to read the *Scripture*, to be mighty in the Divine *Oracles*, as indeed they had an invaluable esteem of and reverence for the Word of God, as the Book which they infinitely prized beyond all others; upon which account *Nazianzen* very severely chides his dear friend *Gregory Nyssen*, that having laid aside the holy  
*In laud. Gorgon. Or. 10. p. 183. De vit. Const. lib. 4. c. 22. Ibid. c. 15. p. 533. Epist. 43. p. 804.* Scriptures



Part 1. Scriptures (the most excellent Writings in the world) which he was wont to read both *privately* to himself, and *publickly* to the people, he had given up himself to the study of *foreign* and *prophane* Authors, desirous rather to be accounted an *Orator* than a *Christian*. S. *Austine* tells us, that after his conversion (how meanly soever he had before thought of them) the *Scriptures* were become the matter of his most *pure* and *chaste* delight, in respect whereof all other Books (even those of *Cicero* himself, which once he had so much doted on) became dry and unfavoury to him. In the study of this Book it was that Christians then mainly exercised themselves, as thinking they could never fully enough *understand* it, or deeply enough *imprint* it upon their hearts and memories. Of the younger *Theodosius* they tell us, that rising early every morning, he together with his Sisters interchangeably sung *Psalms* of praise to God; the holy Scriptures he could exactly *repeat* in any part of them, and was wont to discourse out of them with the Bishops that were at *Court*, as readily as if he had been an old Bishop *himself*. We read of *Origen*, though then but a child, that

Vid. Confess. lib 3. c. 5. & l. 7. c. 20, 21.

Socrat. H. Eccles. lib. 7. c. 22. p. 361.

Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 6. c. 2. p. 202.

that when his Father commanded him Part 1: to commit some places of Scripture to *memory*, he most willingly set himself to it, and not content with the bare reading, he began to enquire into the more profound and recondite meaning of it, often asking his Father (to his no less *joy* than *admiration*) what the sense of this or that place of Scripture was; and this thirst after divine knowledge still continued and encreased in him all his life, S. *Hierom* reporting it out of a Letter of one that was his great *companion* and benefactor, that he never went to *meals* without some part of Scripture read, never to *sleep*, till some about him had read them to him, and that both by *night* and *day* no sooner had he done praying but he betook himself to reading, and after reading returned again to prayer. *Valens* Deacon of the Church of *Jerusalem*, a venerable old man, had so entirely given up himself to the study of the Scriptures, that it was all one to him to *read*, or to *repeat* whole pages together. The like we find of *John* an *Egyptian* Confessor (whom *Eusebius* saw and heard) that though both his *eyes* were put out, and his body mangled with unheard of cruelty, yet he was able at any

Ep. ad Marcell. tom. 1. p. 129.

Euseb. de Martyr. Palest. c. 11. p. 336.

Ib c. ult. p. 334.

Part I. any time to repeat any places or passages either out of the *old* or *new* Testament; which when I first heard him do in the publick Congregation, I supposed him (*say he*) to have been reading in a Book, till coming near, and finding how it was, I was struck with great admiration at it. Certainly Christians then had no mean esteem of, took no small delight in these sacred Volumes: for the sake of this Book (which he had chosen to be the *companion* and *counsellor* of his life) *Naxianzen* professes he had willingly undervalued and relinquished all other things; this was the *mine* where they enriched themselves with divine *treasures*, a Book where they furnished themselves with a true stock of knowledge; as *S. Hierom* speaks of *Nepotian*, that by daily reading and meditation he had made his soul a *Library* of *Christ*; and he tells us of *Blessilla* a devout Widow, that though she was so far over-run with weakness and sickness, that her *foot* would scarce bear her *body*, or her *neck* sustain the burden of her *head*, yet she was never found without a *Bible* in her *hand*.

Nor did they covetously hoard up, and reserve this excellent knowledge to

*De pace.*  
*Or. 12. p.*  
*193.*

*Epitaph.*  
*Nepot. nom.*  
*1. p. 25.*

*Ep. ad*  
*Paul. p.*  
*157.*

to *themselves*, but freely *communicated* Part I. it to others, especially were careful to *catechise* and instruct their *Children* and *Servants* in the principles of Religion. *Page 3.* *S. Clemens* praises the *Corinthians* that *Ib. p. 31.* they took care to admonish their young men to follow those things that were modest and comely, and accordingly exhorts them to instruct the *younger* in the knowledge of the fear of God, to make their children partakers of the discipline of *Christ*, to teach them how much humility and a chaste love do prevail with God, that the fear of him is good and useful, and preserves all those who with pure thoughts lead a holy life according to his will. The *Historian* observes *De vit.* of *Constantine*, that his first and greatest *Const. lib.* care towards his *Sons*, was to secure the *4. c. 51.* happiness of their *souls*, by sowing the seeds of *piety* in their minds, which he did partly himself, instructing them in the knowledge of divine things, and partly by appointing such *Tutors* as were most approved for Religion: and when *Ib. c. 52.* *p. 552.* he had taken them into a partnership of the Government, and either by private admonitions, or by Letters gave them counsels for the steering themselves, this was always the first and chief, that they should

Part 1. should prefer the knowledge and worship of *God*, the great *King* of the world, before all other advantages, yea before the *Empire* it self. For this *Nazianzen* peculiarly commends his Mother, that not only she her self was *consecrated* to God, and brought up under a pious education, but that she conveyed it down as a necessary inheritance to her *Children*; and it seems her Daughter *Gorgonia* was so well seasoned with these holy principles, that she religiously walked in the steps of so good a pattern, and did not only reclaim her *Husband*, but educated her *Children* and *Nephews* in the ways of Religion, giving them an excellent example while she *lived*, and leaving this as her last charge and request when she *died*. This was the *discipline* under which *Christians* were brought up in those times, Religion was instilled into them betimes, which grew up and mixed it self with their ordinary labours and recreations, insomuch that the most rude and illiterate persons instead of prophane wanton *Songs*, which *vitiare* and corrupt the minds of men

In land.  
Cæsarii Or.  
10. p. 161.

Id. Or. 11.  
p. 180.

In Psalm.  
117: 10m.  
3. p. 358.

τὰς σαλαρινὰς ᾠδὰς as *Chrysostom* calls them, (*Songs of the Devils composition*) used nothing but *spiritual* and divine *Hymns*, so that

that (as *Hierom* relates of the place where Part 1. he lived) you could not go into the field, but you might hear the *Plowman* Ep. ad Marcell. at his *Hallelujahs*, the *Mower* at his *Hymns*, and the *Vine-Dresser* singing *Davids Psalms*. tom. 1. p. 127.

Thus they carried themselves at home, what they did in publick in their *Church-Assemblies*, on the Lords-day especially, is next to be considered; the manner whereof I shall briefly represent, as it generally and for the most part obtained in those Ages, for it could not but vary something according to *time* and *place*. And here I should save my self the trouble of any further search, by setting down the account which *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* give of their *publick Worship* in their *Apologies* for the *Christians*, but that I am satisfied they did not design to give a perfect and particular account of what was done at their religious *Assemblies*, as might sufficiently appear from this one thing, that the first of them in those places speaks not any thing of their *Hymns* and *Psalms*; which yet that they were (even in the times wherein they lived) a constant part of the *Divine Service*, no man that is not wholly a stranger in *Church-Antiquity*

Part 1. tiquity can be ignorant of. I shall therefore out of them and others pick up and put together what seems to have constituted the main body of their publick duties, and represent them in that order wherein they were performed, which usually was in this manner. At their first coming together into the *Congregation*, they began with *Prayer*, as *Tertul-  
lian* at least probably intimates (for I do not find it in any besides him) we come together (*says he*) unto God, that being banded as 'twere into an *Army* we may besiege him with our prayers and petitions; a *violence* which is very pleasing and grateful to him; I do not from hence positively conclude that prayer was the first duty they began with, though it seems fairly to look that way, especially if *Tertullian* meant to represent the order as well as the substance of their devotions. After this followed the reading of the *Scriptures* both of the *old* and *new Testament*, both the *Commentaries* of the *Apostles* and the *Writings* of the *Prophets*, as *J. Martyr* informs us. How much of each was read at one meeting, in the first times, is not known, it being then unfixed and arbitrary; because their meetings, by the sudden

*Apol. c. 39.  
p. 31.*

*Apol. 2.  
p. 98.*

sudden interruption of the Heathens, Part 1. were oft disturbed and broken up, and therefore both *Justin* and *Tertullian* confess that they only read as much as *occasion* served, and the *condition* of the present times did require: but afterwards there were *set portions* assigned, both out of the *Old* and *New Testament*, two *Lessons* out of each, as we find it in the *Author* of the *Apostolical Constitutions*. Nay not only the *Canonical Scriptures*, but many of the *Writings* of *Apostolical* men (such as were eminent for *place* and *piety*) were in those days publicly read in the Church, such was the famous *Epistle* of *S. Clemens* to the *Corinthians*; of which and of the custom in like cases *Dionysius* Bishop of *Corinth*, who lived about the year 172. gives *Soter* Bishop of *Rome* this account: *to day* (*says he*) *we kept holy the Lords-day, wherein we read your Epistle, which we shall constantly read for our instruction, as we also do the first Epistle which Clemens wrote to us.* The like *Eusebius* reports of *Hermas* his *Pastor* (a Book so called) and *S. Hierom* of the *Writings* of *S. Ephrem* the famous *Deacon* of *Edeffa*, that in some Churches they were publicly read, after the read-

*Lib. 2 c. 57  
p. 875.*

*Euseb. Hist.  
Ecc. lib. 4.  
c. 23 p. 149*

*H. Eccles.  
lib. 3. c. 3.  
p. 72.  
De Scriptis  
Ecclesiast.  
in voc. E-  
phrem.  
p. 300.*

Part 1. ing of the holy Scriptures. About this part of the service it was that they sung *Hymns* and *Psalms*, a considerable part of the Divine Worship (as it had ever been accounted both amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*) and more immediately serviceable for celebrating the honour of God, and lifting up the minds of men to divine and heavenly raptures. 'Twas in use in the very infancy of the Christian Church, spoken of largely by *S. Paul*, and continued in all Ages after, insomuch that *Pliny* reports it as the main part of the Christians Worship, that they met together before day to join in singing *Hymns to Christ as God*: these *Hymns* were either *extemporary* raptures, so long as immediate *inspiration* lasted, or *set* compositions, either taken out of the holy Scriptures, or of their own composing, as *Tertullian* tells us: for it was usual then for any persons to compose divine Songs to the honour of *Christ*, and to sing them in the Publick Assemblies, till the Council of *Laodicea* ordered, that no *Psalms* composed by *private* persons should be recited in the Church; where though by the *Isidori* and *Jarudi* the two *Greek Scholiasts* will have certain *Psalms* ascribed to

Lib. 10.  
Ep. 97.

Ap. c. 39.  
P. 32.  
Euseb. l. 3.  
c. 28. p. 196

Can. 59.

to *Solomon* and others to be understood, Part 1. yet it's much more reasonable to understand it of *private constitutions*, usual a long time in the Church, and here for good reason prohibited. By this Council it was likewise appointed, that the *Psalms* should not be one entire continued service, but that a *Lesson* should be interposed in the midst after every *Psalms*; which was done (as *Balsamon* and *Alexius Aristenus* tell us) to take off the weariness of the people, whose minds might be apt to tire in passing through those prolix offices all together, especially the *Lessons* being so large and many. In this duty the whole Congregation bore a part, joining all together in a common celebration of the praises of God; afterwards the custom was to sing *alternatim* course by course, answering one another, first brought in (as we are told) by *Flavianus* and *Diodorus* in the Church of *Antioch* in the Reign of *Constantine*; but if we may believe *Socrates*, some hundreds of years before that, by *Ignatius* who was Bishop of that Church, who having in a vision heard the *Angels* praising the *holy Trinity* with *alternate* *Hymns*, thereupon introduced the use of it in that Church, which from

Can. 17.

Theod. Hist.  
Eccl. lib. 2.  
c. 24. p. 78.

Hist. Eccl.  
lib. 6. c. 8.  
p. 313.

**Part 1.** thence spread it self into all other Churches; and whether *Pliny* (who lived about that time) might not mean some such thing by his *secum invicem canere*, that the Christians sung Hymns one with another, or in their courses, may be considered by those who think it worth their labour to enquire. In the mean time we proceed; the Reader having done (they are the words of *Justin the Martyr*) the President of the Assembly makes a Sermon by way of instruction and exhortation, to the imitation and practice of those excellent things that they had heard. And indeed Sermons in those times were nothing else but the expositions of some part of the Scriptures which had been read before, and exhortations to the people to obey the doctrines contained in them, and commonly were upon the Lesson which was last read, because that being freshest in the peoples memory, was most proper to be treated of, as *S. Augustine* both avers the custom, and gives the reason. Hence, in the Writers of the Church, Preachers came to be called *Tractatores*, and their Sermons *Tractatus*, because they handled or treated of such places of Scripture as had been a little before read

Eccl. Supr.  
file

Serm. 237.  
de temp.  
tom. 10.  
col. 1116.

read unto the people. According as occasion was these Sermons were more or fewer, sometimes two or three at the same Assembly, the Presbyters first and then the Bishop, as is expressly affirmed in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, then (i.e. after the reading of the Gospel) let the Presbyters exhort the people one by one, not all at once, and after all the Bishop, as it is fitting for the Master to do. And thus *Gregory Nyssen* excuses himself for not introducing his Sermons with a tedious Preface, because he would not be burdensom to the people, who had already taken pains to hear those admirable discourses that had been made before him.

This course they held not in the morning only, but likewise in the afternoon (at some times at least) when they had their publick Prayers and Sermons to the people. This *Chrysostom* assures us of in an *Homily* upon this very subject, in commendation of those who came to Church after Dinner, and that as he tells them, in greater numbers than before; who instead of sleeping after Dinner, came to hear the divine Laws expounded to them; instead of walking upon the Exchange, and entertain-

Ut supra.  
p. 876.

Εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ὁμιλίαν.  
tom. 1. p. 872.

Ἐπειδὴ οὖν τῶν μετὰ τὴν ἐσθλασίν ἀπολυτῶν ἐκ τῆς ἀκροατικῆς.  
Hom. 10.  
ad Pop. Antioch. p. 116. Tom.

Part I. ing themselves with idle and unprofitable chat, came and stood amongst their brethren, to converse with the discourses of the *Prophets*. And this he tells them he put them in mind of, not that it was a reproach to *eat* and to *drink*, but that having done so, it was a shame to *stay at home*, and deprive themselves of those religious Solemnities. The same 'twere easie to make good from several passages in *S. Basil*, *S. Augustine*, and others, who frequently refer to those Sermons which they had preached in the morning.

But how many soever the discourses were, the people were ready enough to entertain them, flocking to them as to their spiritual meals and banquets.

*Apolo. 39.* We meet together (says Tertullian) to hear the holy Scriptures rehearsed to us, that so according to the quality of the times we may be either forewarned or corrected by them: for certainly with these holy words we nourish our Faith, erect our hope, seal our confidence, and by these inculcations are the better established in obedience to the divine commands. *Nazianzen* tells us what vast numbers used to meet in his Church at *Constantinople*, of all Sexes, of all sorts and

*Orat. 32.*  
p. 517.

and ranks of persons, rich and poor, Part I.  
*honourable* and *ignoble*, *learned* and *simple*, *Governours* and *People*, *Souldiers* and *Tradesmen*, all here unanimously conspiring together, and greedily desirous to learn the knowledge of divine things. The like *Chrysostom* reports of the Church at *Antioch*, that they would set aside all affairs at home, to come and hear Sermons at Church; he tells them 'twas the great *honour* of the City, not so much that it had large *suburbs* and vast numbers of people, or brave houses with gilded Dining-Rooms, as that it had a *diligent* and *attentive* people. And elsewhere, that 'twas the great encouragement of his ministry, to see such a famous and chearful concourse, a people so well ordered and desirous to hear; that 'twas this advanced their City above the honour of a *Senate*, or the Office of *Consul*, or the variety of *Statues* or ornaments, or the plenty of its *Merchandise*, or the commodiousness of its *scituation*; in that its people were so earnest to hear and learn, its Churches so thronged and crowded, and all persons inflamed with such an insatiable desire of the word that was preached to them; yea that this it was that adorned the

*Hom. 56.*  
*tom. 1. p.*  
623.

*Hom. 4. in*  
*verb. Esaiæ*  
*vid. Dem.*  
*Eccl. tom. 3.*  
p. 750.

Part 1. the City even above *Rome* it self. And indeed the commendation is the greater, in that commonness did not breed contempt, it being usual in that Church (as *Chrysostom* often intimates) for a good part of the year to have Sermons every day.

Well, *Sermon* being ended, prayers were made with and for the *Catechumens*, *Penitents*, *Possessed*, and the like, according to their respective capacities and qualifications, the persons that were in every rank departing as soon as the prayer that particularly concerned them was done: first the *Catechumens*, and then the *Penitents*, as is prescribed in the nineteenth Canon of the *Laodicean Council*: for no sooner was the service thus far performed, but all that were under baptism, or under the discipline of penance, *i. e.* all that might not communicate at the *Lords Table*, were commanded to depart, the *Deacon* crying aloud, ΟΣ ΟΙ ΚΑΤΗΧΟΥΜΕΝΟΙ ΠΡΟΕΛΘΕΤΕ, *Those that are Catechumens go out*; in the *Latine Church* the form was *ITE, MISSA EST*, depart, there is a dismissal of you, *missa* being the same with *missio*, as *re-missa* oft used in some Writers for *re-missio* (and so the word *missa* is used by

by *Cassian* even in his time, for the dismissal of the Congregation.) Hence it was that the whole Service from the beginning of it till the time that the Hearers were dismissed came to be called *Missæ Catechumenorum*, the *Mass* or Service of the *Catechumens*, as that which was performed afterwards at the celebration of the *Eucharist* was called *Missæ Fidelium*, the *Mass* or Service of the *Faithful*, because none but they were present at it; and in these notions and no other the word is often to be met with in *Tertullian*, and other ancient Writers of the Church; 'tis true, that in process of time, as the discipline of the *Catechumens* wore out, so that title which belonged to the first part of the Service was forgotten, and the name *missa* was appropriated to the Service of the *Lords Supper*, and accordingly was made use of by the Church of *Rome*, to denote that which they peculiarly call the *Mass* or the propitiatory Sacrifice of the *Altar* at this day; and the more plausibly to impose this delusion upon the people, they do with a great deal of confidence muster up all those places of the Fathers where the word *missa* is to be found, and apply it to their *Mass*; though

Constit. A.  
post. l. 8. c.  
6. p. 1006.

Part 1.  
De instit.  
ut. monach.  
lib. 3. c. 7.  
p. 26.



Part I. though it would puzzle them to produce but one place, where the word is used in the same sense as they use it now, out of any genuine and approved Writer of the Church for at least the first four hundred years. But to return, the *Catechumens*, &c. being departed, and the Church doors shut, they proceeded to the *Lords Supper*, at which the *Faithful* only might be present, wherein they prayed for all states and ranks of men, gave the the *Kiss* of charity, prayed for *consecration* of the Eucharist, then received the sacramental Elements, made their Offerings, and such like; of which I do not now speak particularly, because I intend to treat distinctly of the *Sacraments* afterwards: for the same reason I say nothing concerning their *admonitions*, *Church-censures*, *absolutions*, &c. because these will come under consideration in another place, as also because though managed at their publick Assemblies, were yet only accidental to them, and no settled parts of the Divine Service. This in short was the general form of publick Worship in those ancient times, which although it might vary somewhat according to times and places, did yet for the main and the substance of it hold in all.

That

Part I. That which remains, is a little to remark how the *Christians* carried themselves in the discharge of these solemn duties, which certainly was with singular *reverence* and *devotion*, such *gestures* and *actions* as they conceived might express the greatest *piety* and *humility*. Let both men and women (says *Clemens* of *Alexandria*) come to Church in comely *Padag. l. 3. c. 11. p. 255* apparel, with a *grave* pace, with a modest silence, with a *love* unfeigned, *chast* both in body and mind, and so as they may be fit to put up prayers to God. Let our *speech* in prayer (says *Cyprian*) be under discipline, observing a *deco- De Orat. Dom. p. 188.* rous calmness and modesty; we are to remember that we are under the eye of God, whom we are not to offend either in the *habit* of our body, or the *manner* of our speech; for as 'tis the fashion of those that are impudent to clamour and make a noise, so on the contrary it becomes a sober man to pray with a *modest* voice: when therefore we come together with our brethren into the Assembly, to celebrate the divine *Sacrifices* with the Minister of God, we ought to be mindful of *order* and a reverent regard, and not to throw about our prayers with a *wild* and *confused* voice,

or

Part 1. or with a disorderly prattling to cast forth those petitions, which ought with the greatest modesty to be put up to God. The men prayed with their *heads bare*, as not ashamed to look up to heaven for what they begged of God; the women *covered*, as a sign of the modesty of that Sex, and therefore *Tertullian* severely checks the practice of some women in his time, who in time of worship had no covering on their heads, or what was as good as none; what reproof (*says he*) do they deserve, that continue *unveiled* in singing Psalms, or in any mention of God; or do they think it's enough to lay some thin and slight thing over their heads in prayer, and then think themselves covered. Where he manifestly refers to those rules which the *Apostle* prescribes in this case, and concludes at last, that they should at all times and in all places be mindful of the rule, being ready and provided against all mention of the name of God, who if he be in womens *hearts*, will be known on their *heads*, viz. by a modest *carriage* and *covering* of them in their addresses to him. Their hands they did not only *lift* up to heaven (a posture in prayer common both among

Jews

De Virg.  
veland p.  
304.

Jews and Gentiles) but they did *expand* Part 1.  
and spread them abroad, that so by this means they might shadow out an *image* of the *Cross*, or rather a resemblance of him that hung upon it, as *Tertullian* De Orat.  
more than once and again informs us: c. 11. Apol.  
Prayer (*says another*) is a conversing " 39.  
with God, and the way to heaven, and *Asterius A-*  
to stretch out our hands is to form the *masen.*  
resemblance of *Christ crucified*; which *Hom. de*  
whoever prays should do, not only as *precat. a-*  
to the *form* and figure, but in reality *pud Phot.*  
and affection; for as he that is fastned to *Cod. 271.*  
the Cross surely dyes, so he that prays *col. 1496.*  
should *crucifie* the desires of the flesh, and every inordinate lust and passion. In the performing of this duty, they either *kneeled*, which was most usual, or *stood*, which they always did upon the *Lords day*, for a reason which we have spoken of before; sitting was ever held a posture of great *rudeness* and *irreverence*; nay *Tertullian* falls heavy upon some that *De Orat. c.*  
used presently to *clap* themselves down *12. p. 134.*  
upon their seats, as soon as ever prayer was done, and down-right charges it as against *Scripture*; if it be an irreverent thing (as he *argues*) to sit down before, or over against a person for whom thou hast a mighty reverence and veneration;  
how

**Part 1.** how much more does it favour of *irreligion* to do so in the presence of the *living God*, while the *Angel* is yet standing by thee to carry up the prayer to heaven, unless we have a mind to *reproach* God to his face, and tell him that we are weary of the duty.

Another custom which they had in prayer was, that they constantly prayed towards the *East*; this was so universally common, that there's scarce any ancient Ecclesiastical Writer but speaks of it; though not many of them agree in assigning the *reason* of it; the custom doubtless begun very early, and is generally ascribed to the *Apostles*; so the Author of the *Questions and Answers* assures us, and tells us it was because the *East* was accounted the most *excellent* part of the Creation, and seeing in prayer we must turn our faces towards some quarter, 'twas fittest it should be towards the *East*: just (*says he*) as in making the sign of the *Cross* in the name of *Christ*, we use the right hand, because 'tis better than the left, not in its own nature, but only in its *positure* and *fitness* for our use. *S. Basil* likewise reckons it amongst the *traditions* that had been derived from the *Apostles*, but tells us

Quest. 118.  
p. 471.

De Spirit.  
S. c. 27 p.  
3 c. 2. tom. 2  
Athanas.  
ad Antioch.  
Quest. 37.  
p. 285.  
tom. 2.  
Const App.  
lib. 2. c. 37.  
p. 876.

the

the *Mystery* of it was, that hereby they Part 1.  
respected *Paradise*, which God planted in the *East*, begging of him that they might be restored to that ancient Country from whence they had been cast out. This might probably be with those who dwelt in the *Western* parts of the world, but how it could be done by those who lived *East* of the Garden of *Eden* (suppose in any parts of *India*) I am not able to imagine. *Clemens Alex.* tells us *Strom. lib.* that herein they had respect to *Christ*, 7 p. 724. for as the *East* is the birth and womb of the natural day; from whence the *Sun* (the Fountain of all sensible light) does arise and spring; so *Christ* the true *Sun of righteousness*, who arose upon the world with the *light* of truth, when it sat in the *darkness* of error and ignorance, is in Scripture stiled the *East*, and therefore our prayers are directed thither. For which reason *Tertullian* calls the *East*, the figure or the type of *Christ*: *Contr. Valent c. 3 p. 251.* but whatever the true reason was, I'm sure 'tis a sober account which *Athanasius* gives of it; we do not (*says he*) *ubi supr. p. 284.* worship towards the *East*, as if we thought God any ways shut up in those parts of the world, but because God is in himself, and is so stiled in Scripture,

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the

Part 1. *the true light; in turning therefore towards that created light, we do not worship it, but the great Creator of it; taking occasion from that most excellent element, to adore that God who was before all elements and ages of the world.* This was their carriage for prayer; nor were they less humble and reverent in other parts of Worship, they heard the Scriptures read and preached with all possible gravity and attention, which that they might the better do, they were wont to *stand* all the while the *Sermon* continued, none sitting then but the Bishop and Presbyters that were about him; so *Optatus* expressly tells us, that the people had no privilege to *sit down* in the Church: though whether the custom was universally so in all places, I much doubt; nay *S. Augustine* tells us, that in some *transmarine* (I suppose he means *the Western*) Churches it was otherwise, the people having seats placed for them as well as the *Ministers*. But generally the people *stood*, partly to express the *reverence*, partly to keep their attentions *awake and lively*. Hence it was part of the *Deacons* Office (as *Chrysostom* tells us, and the same we find in the ancient *Greek Liturgies*) to call upon the

*De Schism.  
Donatist. l.  
4. p. 115.*

*De Cate-  
chis. rudib.  
c. 13. tom.  
4. col. 907.*

*De incom-  
parab. Dei  
natur. Hom.  
4. p. 353.  
tom. 1.*

the people with an *ΟΡΘΟΙ ΣΤΗΜΕΝ ΚΑΛΩΣ*, Part 1. *Let us duly stand upright*, respecting the decent posture of their *bodies*, though withal principally intending the *elevation* of their *minds*, the lifting up their thoughts from low sordid objects to those spiritual and divine things, they were then conversant about. But what ever they did in other parts of the publick Service, they constantly stood up at the reading of the *Gospel*; a custom generally embraced in all parts of the Christian world. Therefore *Sozomen* *H. Eccl. lib. 7. c. 19. p. 734.* discoursing of the various rights observed in several Churches, notes it as an unusual thing in the Bishop of *Alexandria*, that he did not rise up when the Gospels were read; a thing (*says he*) which I never saw nor heard of in any other place: and *Philostorgius* tells us *H. Eccl. l. 3. num. 5 p. 29.* of *Theophilus* the *Indian* Bishop, that amongst several *irregularities* which he corrected in those Churches, he particularly reformed this, that the people were wont to *sit* while the *Lessons* out of the Gospel were read to them. Nor did the greatest personages think themselves too high to express this piece of reverence in their attendance upon the King of Kings. 'Tis very memorable

Part 1. what we read concerning the great *Constantine*, that when upon occasion *Eusebius* was to make a *Panegyrick* concerning the *Sepulchre* of our Saviour, though it was not in the *Church*, but in the *Palace*, yet he refused to sit all the time, and when *Eusebius* beseeched him to sit down in his *Throne*, that was hard by him, he would not, but attentively heard, judged, and approved those things that were spoken: and when after a good while, the *Sermon* having been prolix, *Eusebius* out of compliance would have broken off and done, he called to him to go on till he came to the full end of his discourse; whereupon he was again solicited to sit down, but refused, affirming it to be unfit to attend upon any discourse concerning God, and much more at this time, with ease and softness; and that it was very consonant to piety and religion that discourses about divine things should be heard standing. So great a reverence had that excellent Prince for the solemnities of divine Worship. In the discharge of these holy Exercises as they carried themselves with all seriousness and gravity, so they continued in them till they were compleatly finished; there was then no such

De vit.  
Constant.  
lib 4. c. 33.  
p. 542.

such airiness and levity as now possesses Part 1: the minds of men, no *snatching* at some pieces of the Worship, *tanquam Canis ad Nilum*, and gone again, no rude disorderly departing the Congregation, till the whole Worship and Service of God was over. And therefore when this warmth and vigour of the first Ages was a little abated, the Council of *Orleans* thought good to re-establish the primitive devotion by this Canon, *That when* Can. 22.  
*the people came together for the celebration of divine Service, they should not depart till the whole Solemnity was over, and the Bishop or Presbyter had given the blessing.*

## CHAP. X.

## Of Baptism, and the administration of it in the Primitive Church.

*Four circumstances considered. Baptism by whom administered. By none usually without the leave of the Bishop. The great controversy about re-baptizing those that had been baptized by Heretics. An account of it out of Cyprian. Laymen how suffered to baptize. The opinion of the absolute necessity of Baptism. The case of Athanasius his baptizing when but a Child. Women never permitted to baptize. Persons to be baptized, who. Infants. Sufficient evidence for Infant-baptism in the ancient Writers of the Church. Some passages out of Cyprian noted. The baptized most-what adult persons. The stated times of Baptism, Easter and Whitsuntide, and why. Especially upon Easter Eve, and why. In cases of necessity at any other time. Clinici, who. Clinic-baptism accounted less perfect, why. Usual to defer Baptism till a death-bed; and the reason of it; noted in*

*in Constantine and others. Being baptized for the dead, what (probably.) The usual place of Baptism in or near the Church; always before the Congregation. The Baptisterium or Font where it stood, and how large. Its distinct apartments for men and women. A curiosity in many in those times of being baptized in Jordan, and why. The manner of the Administration. The person baptized looked towards the West, and why. Their answering as to the profession of their faith. Their solemn abrenunciation made twice; and the form of it. Sureties in Baptism. Persons baptized exorcised; what meant by it. Unction upon what account used; several reasons of it assigned by the Fathers. The sign of the Cross made in Baptism, evident out of the ancient Fathers. Of immersion, or putting the person under water: what it shadowed out. Generally in use in those Countries, not absolutely necessary in others. Triple immersion: different reasons of it assigned by the Fathers. It obtained not in Spain, and why. A second Unction. Persons after Baptism clothed in white garments, and why. These kept in the Church as a testimony of their solemn engagement: a memo-*

Part 1. *rable instance out of Victor Uticensis. A brief account of confirmation: the neglect of it bewailed.*

OUR Lord having instituted Baptism and the Lords Supper as the two great *Sacraments* of the *Christian* Law, they have accordingly been ever accounted principal parts of publick Worship in the Christian Church; we shall treat first of *Baptism*, as being the *door* by which persons enter in, the great and solemn rite of our initiation into the faith of Christ; concerning which, four circumstances are chiefly to be enquired into; the *persons* by and upon whom; the *time* when, the *place* where, the *manner* how this Sacrament was administred in the ancient Church.

For the *persons* by whom this Sacrament was administred, they were the *Ministers* of the Gospel, the *Stewards* of the *mysteries of Christ*, baptizing and preaching the Gospel being joined together by our *Saviour* in the same Commission; usually 'twas done by the Bishop, the *possess* in *J. Martyr*, the *Antistes* in *Tertullian*, the *President* or chief Minister of the Congregation, the *summus sacerdos, qui est Episcopus*, as he calls him,

him, without whose leave and authority neither *Presbyters* nor *Deacons* might take upon them to baptize, as not only *Epist. ad Smyrnaeos. p. 6.* *Ignatius* but *Tertullian* expressly tells us, and if they did, it was only in case of necessity, as is affirmed by an ancient Author who lived in or near the time of *Cyprian*: the same *S. Hierome* assures us was the custom in his time, though otherwhiles we find the Bishop to begin the action, and the *Presbyters* to carry it on and finish it. But as Christianity encreased, this became a more familiar part of the *Presbyters* and the *Deacons* office, and doubtless had been more or less executed by them from the beginning, though out of reverence to the Bishop, and to preserve the honour of the Church (as *Tertullian* gives the reason) they did it not without his leave and deputation, and 'tis certain that *Philip* baptized the *Eunuch*, who yet was of no higher order than that of *Deacon*. Nor was it accounted enough by some in those times, that Baptism was conferred by a person called to the Ministry, unless he was also *orthodox* in the Faith. This became matter of great bustle in the Church; hence sprang that famous controverſie between *Cyprian* and

*Epist. ad Smyrnaeos. p. 6.*

*De Baptism. c. 17. p. 240.*

*De non rebaptiz. apud Cyp. p. 138.*

*Dial. adv. Lucifer. p. 139.*

*Ambr. de Sacram. l. 3. c. 1.*

Part 1. and *Stephen Bishop of Rome*, concerning *re-baptizing* those that had been baptized by *Hereticks* (of which there is so much in *Cyprians Writings*) *Cyprian* asserting that they ought to be re-baptized, the other as stiffly maintaining it to be both against the *doctrine* and *practice* of the Church. This begot great heats and feuds between those good men, and engaged a great part of the whole Christian Church in the quarrel, *Cyprian* endeavouring to strengthen his cause not only by arguments from *Scripture*, but by calling a Council at *Carthage* of eighty seven *African Bishops*, who all concluded for his opinion. How truly *Cyprian* maintained this, I am not concerned to enquire; only I take notice of two things which he and his Followers pleaded by way of abatement to the *rigour* of their opinion. First that hereby they did not assert *re-baptization* to be lawful, this they expressly deny to receive any patronage from their practice, for they looked upon that baptism that had been conferred by *Hereticks* as *null* and *invalid* (seeing *Hereticks* being out of the Church could not give what they had not) and therefore when any returned to the union of the Church

*Cyp. Ep. ad Quint. de Haret. bap. Ep. 71. p. 119. & Concil. Carth. apud Cyp. senten. 35. p. 286.*

Church they could not properly be said Part 1. to be re-baptized, seeing they did but receive what (*lawfully*) they had not before. Secondly, that they did not *pro-* *Cyp. ibid. & Conc. Carthag. senten. 8. & Cyrill. pref. Catech. ad il- lumin. p. 9.* *miscuously* baptize all that came over from heretical Churches, for where any had been lawfully baptized by *Orthodox* Ministers before their going over to them, these they received at their return without any other Ceremony than *imposition* of hands; baptizing those only who never had any other baptism than that which *Hereticks* had conferred upon them. *Cyprian* being thus severe against baptism dispensed by *heretical* Ministers, we may wonder what he thought of that which was administered by meer *lay-unordained* persons, which yet was not uncommon in those times: for that *Lay-men* (provided they were Christians and baptized themselves) might and did baptize others in cases of necessity, is so positively asserted by *Tertullian*, *Loc. antea citat.* *Hierom*, and others, that no man can doubt of it. A custom ratified by the Fathers of the *Illiberine Council*, with this *proviso*, that if the persons so baptized lived, they should receive *confirmation* from the Bishop. This without question arose from an opinion they had of

*Can. 38.*



Part 1. of the absolute and indispensable necessity of Baptism, without which they scarce thought a mans future condition could be safe, and that therefore 'twas better it should be had from *any*, than to depart this life without it; for excepting the case of *Martyrs* (whom they thought sufficiently qualified for heaven by being baptized in their own blood, insisting upon a twofold Baptism, one of *water* in time of peace, another of *blood* in the time of persecution; answerable to the *water* and *blood* that flowed out of our *Saviours* side: excepting these) they reckoned no man could be saved without being baptized, and cared not much in cases of necessity, so they had it, how they came by it. As for that act of *Athanasius* (mentioned by the Author of his life in *Photius*, and more largely related by *Sozomen*) when a Boy playing with the rest of his Companions, they formed themselves into a kind of Church-society; *Athanasius* was chosen Bishop, and others personated the *Catechumens* ready to be baptized, and were accordingly with all the usual formalities baptized by *Athanasius*. This juvenile Ceremony being ended, they were brought before *Alexander* the then Bishop

Cyrril. ad  
Illuminat.  
Catech. 3.  
p. 61.

Cod. 258.  
col. 1429.

Hist. Eccl.  
lib. 2. c. 17.  
p. 467.

shop of *Alexandria* (who had himself been Part 1. held the whole scene) who enquiring into the reasons and circumstances of the action, and having consulted with his Clergy that were about him, concluded that those Children ought not to be rebaptized, and therefore only added his confirmation to them. But this being only a particular case, and the like not mentioned that I remember by any Writer of those times, I only relate it as I find it. But though this power in cases of necessity was allowed to *men* (who were capable of having the ministerial office conferred upon them) yet was it ever denied to *women*, whom the Apostle has so expressly forbidden to exercise any ministry in the Church of God, and accordingly censured in the Apostolical Constitutions, to be not only dangerous, but unlawful and impious. Indeed in the Churches of the Hereticks women even in those times took upon them to baptize, but it was universally condemned and cried out against by the Orthodox, and constantly affixed as a note of dishonour and reproach upon the heretical parties of those times, as abundantly appears from *Tertullian*, *Epiphanius*, and others, who records the heretical

Tert. de.  
Bap. c. 17.  
de vel. virg.  
c. 9. de præ-  
script. adv.  
Hæret. c. 41  
Epiph. hæ-  
ref. 49. &  
hæref. 79.  
Ritual.  
Rom. de  
Sacram.  
Bapt. Ru-  
bric. de  
ministr.  
bapt. p. 9.

Part 1. heretical doctrines and practices of those first Ages of the Church; however afterwards it crept in in some places, and is allowed and practised in the Church of *Rome* at this day: where in cases of necessity they give leave that it may be administered by any, and in any language, whether the person administering be a *Clergie* or a *Lay-man* (yea though under *excommunication*). whether he be a *Believer* or an *Infidel*, a *Catholick* or an *Heretick*, a *man* or a *woman*; only taking care, that if it may be, a *Priest* be preferred before a *Deacon*, a *Deacon* before a *Subdeacon*, a *Clergie* man before a *Laic*, and a *man* before a *woman*; together with some other cases which are there wisely provided for.

From the persons *ministring* we proceed to the *persons* upon whom it was conferred, and they were of two sorts, *Infants* and *adult* persons: how far the baptizing of *Infants* is included in our *Saviours* institution is not my work to dispute; but certainly if in controverted cases the constant practice of the Church, and those who immediately succeeded the Apostles be (as no man can deny it is) the best interpreter of the Laws of *Christ*, the dispute one would

would think should be at an end: for Part 1. that it always was the custom to receive the Children of *Christian* Parents into the Church by Baptism, we have sufficient evidence from the greatest part of the most early Writers, *Irenæus*, *Tertul-*<sup>J. G. Voss. de bapt. di-  
sp. 14 p.</sup>*lian*, *Origen*, *Cyprian*, &c. whose testimonies I do not produce, because I find<sup>178. &</sup> them collected by others, and the argument thence so forcible and conclusive,<sup>Forbes, in-  
stru. Hist.  
Theol. lib.  
10. c. 5.  
sect. 14. &  
seq.</sup> that the most zealous opposers of *Infant Baptism* know not how to evade it; the testimonies being so clear, and not the least shadow that I know of in those times of any thing to make against it.<sup>Dr. Ham.  
Defen. of  
Infant Bap-  
tism. c. 4.  
sect. 2.</sup> There was indeed in *Cyprians* time a controversy about the baptizing of *Infants*, not *whether* they ought to be baptized (for of that there was no doubt) but concerning the *time* when it was to be administered, whether on the *second* or *third*, or whether as *Circumcision* of old, to be deferred till the *eighth* day: for the determining of which, *Cyprian* sitting in Council with sixty six Bishops, writes a *Synodical* Epistle to *Fidus*, to<sup>Epist. 60.  
p. 97.</sup> let him know, that it was not necessary to be deferred so long, and that it was their universal judgment and resolution that the *mercy* and *grace* of God was

Part 1. was not to be denied to any, though as soon as he was *born*: concluding, that it was the sentence of the Council, that none ought to be forbidden baptism and the grace of God; which as it was to be observed and retained towards all men, so much more towards *Infants* and *new-born Children*; and that this sentence of theirs was no *novel* doctrine S. Augustine assures us, where speaking concerning this *Synodical* determination, he tells us, that in this *Cyprian* did not make any new decree, but kept the *Faith* of the Church most firm and sure. I shall only taken notice of one place more out of *Cyprian*, which methinks evidently makes for this purpose, where describing the great wickedness and miserable condition of the *lapsed*, such as to avoid persecution had done sacrifice to the Idols, he urges this as one of the last and highest aggravations, that by their apostasie their *Infants* and *Children* were exposed to ruine, and *had lost that which they had obtained at their first coming into the world* (which whether he means it of their *right* to Baptism, or their having been actually baptized, and losing the *fruit* and *benefit* of their Baptism, is all one to my purpose) and therefore

Epist. 28.  
ad Hieronymum  
10m.  
2.col. 108.

De lapsis  
p. 171.

therefore he brings them in thus elegantly pleading against their *Parents* at the great day. *'Twas no fault of ours, we did not of our selves forsake the Sacraments of our Lord, and run over to join with prophane impieties; the unfaithfulness of others has undone us, we have found our Parents to be murderers; they denied us God for our Father, and the Church for our Mother; for while we alas were little, unable to take any care of our selves, and ignorant of so great a wickedness, we were ensnared by the treachery of others, and by them betrayed into a partnership of their impieties.*

This was the case of *Infants*, but those who made up the main body of the baptized in those days, were *adult* persons, who flocking over daily in great numbers to the faith of Christ, were received in at this door: usually they were for some considerable time *catechized*, and trained up in the principles of the Christian Faith, till having given testimony of their proficiency in knowledge (to the Bishop or Presbyter, who were appointed to take their examination, and to whom they were to give an account once a week of what they had learnt) and of a sober and regular con-

X.

versation

Cont. Lab.  
dic. Can.  
46.

Part I. In conversation, they then became *Candidates* for Baptism, and were accordingly taken in; which brings me to the next circumstance considerable concerning

The *Time* when Baptism was wont to be administred: at first all times were alike, and persons were baptized as opportunity and occasion served; but the discipline of the Church being a little settled, it began to be restrained to two solemn and stated times of the year, viz.

*Easter* and *Whitsontide*. At *Easter* in memory of Christs *death* and *resurrection*, correspondent unto which are the two parts of the Christian life represented and shadowed out in Baptism, *dying* unto sin, and *rising* again unto newness of life, in order to which the parties to be baptized were to prepare themselves by a strict observation of *Lent*, disposing and fitting themselves for Baptism by fasting and prayer. In some places, particularly the Churches of *Thessaly*, *Easter* was the only time for Baptism (as *Socrates* tells us) which was the reason why many amongst them died *unbaptized*: but this was an usage peculiar to them alone. The ancient custom of the Church (as *Zonaras* tells us) was for persons to be baptized especially upon the *Saturday* before

before *Easter-day*, the reason whereof Part I. was, that this being the *great* or *holy sabbath*, and the mid-time between the day whereon Christ was *buried*, and that whereon he *rose* again, did fitliest correspond with the mystery of Baptism, as it is the *type* and representation both of our Lords *burial* and *resurrection*. At *Whitsontide*; in memory of the *Holy Ghosts* being shed upon the *Apostles*, the same being in some measure represented and conveyed in Baptism. When I say that these were the two fixed times of Baptism, I do not strictly mean it of the precise days of *Easter* and *Whitsontide*, but also of the whole intermediate space of fifty days that is between them, which was in a manner accounted *Festival*, and Baptism administred during the whole time, as I have formerly noted. Besides these, *Nazianzen* <sup>εἰς τὸ ἄγιον</sup> reckons the Feast of *Epiphany* as an annual time of Baptism, probably in memory either of the *Birth* or *Baptism* of our *Saviour*, both which anciently went under that title: this might be the custom in some places, but I question whether it was universal, besides that afterwards it was prohibited and laid aside. But though persons in health, and the

Part. de  
Baptism.  
c. 19 p. 232

Cy. ill. pra.  
lat. Ca.  
ch. ad il.  
minat.  
p. 6.

H. Ecclef.  
p. c. c. 22.  
p. 287.

I. Can. 49.  
Cane. Laod.

εἰς τὸ ἄγιον  
Bapt. O.  
rat. 40.  
p. 654.

Part 1. space that was requisite for the instruction of the *Catechumens* might well enough comport with these annual returns, yet if there was a *necessity* (as in case of *sickness* and danger of *death*) they might be baptized at any other time: for finding themselves at any time surprized with a dangerous or a mortal sickness, and not daring to pass into another world without this *Badge* of their initiation into *Christ*, they presently signified their earnest desire to be baptized, which was accordingly done as well as the circumstances of a sick Bed would permit. These were called *Clinici* (of whom there is frequent mention in the ancient Writers of the Church) because *ἐν τῇ κλίνῃ βαπτίζοντο*, baptized as they *lay along* in their beds. This was accounted a less solemn and perfect kind of Baptism, partly because 'twas done not by *immersion*, but by *sprinkling*; partly because persons were supposed at such a time to desire it, chiefly out of a *fear* of death, and many times when not throughly *Masters* of their understandings. For which reason persons so baptized (if they recovered) are by the Fathers of the *Neocæsarean* Council rendred ordinarily incapable of being

Can. 12.

being admitted to the degree of *Presbyters* in the Church. Indeed 'twas very usual in those times (notwithstanding that the Fathers did solemnly and smartly declaim against it) for persons to defer their being baptized till they were near their death, out of a kind of *Novatian* principle, that if they fell into sin after Baptism, there would be no place for repentance, mistaking that place of the *Apostle*, where 'tis said that *if they who have been once enlightened* (*ἀναγενομένης*, which the Ancients generally understand of *Baptism*) *fall away, 'tis impossible to renew them again unto repentance*. For some such reason we may suppose it was that *Constantine* the Great deferred his Baptism till he lay a dying; the same which *Socrates* relates of his Son *Constantius*, baptized a little before his death: and the like he reports of the Emperour *Theodosius*, who apprehending himself to be arrested with a mortal sickness, presently caused himself to be baptized, though he recovered afterwards. To this custom of *Clinic Baptism* some not improbably think the *Apostle* has reference in that famous place, where he speaks of those that are *baptized for the dead*, *καὶ νεκρῶν*, which they

Euseb. de  
vit. Const.  
lib. 4. c. 61,  
62. p. 557.  
Hist. Eccl.  
l. 2. c. 47.  
p. 161.

Lib. 5. c. 6.  
p. 262.

Vid. Voss.  
Thes. de  
Baptism.  
p. 161. &c.  
de Resur.  
Thes. 18.

Part 1. they expound with reference to the *state of the dead*, and that 'tis meant of such who in danger of death would be baptized, that it might fare well with them after death. This *Epiphanius* thinks the truest interpretation, that it's meant of *Catechumens*; who being suddenly surprised with death, would be baptized that so their sins being remitted in Baptism, they might go hence under the hope of that eternal life which awaits good men after death, and testify their belief and expectation of their future happy resurrection. Others think it may refer to the *place of Baptism*, those who are baptized *in* *the Graves*, or Sepulchres of the dead, it being an ancient and general custom to have their religious meetings, and to perform their publick exercises at the *Tombs of Martyrs*; there being numerous instances in the *acts* of the Martyrs, of such as were baptized in the *Cæmeteria*, over the Monuments of the *dead*, Which soever of these is most suitable, yet certainly either of them is far more probable than that which many talk so much of, as if the Apostle meant it of a *custom* common in those primitive times amongst the *Gentiles*, and other Hereticks, where

Heres. 28.  
p. 54. vid.  
Matth.  
Blast. Syn.  
tag. c. 1. lit.  
B. p. 41.

Vid. Prudent.  
Petrus.  
Hymn. 8.  
p. 110.

Vid. Epiphanius.  
Hæres. 28. con-  
tra Cæ-  
sar. p. 54.

when any died without Baptism, they used to place another under his *Bed*, who was baptized for him in his *stead*; whence *Tertullian* calls it a *vicarious Baptism*; it being highly improbable, that the great Apostle would fetch an argument to confirm so solemn and fundamental a principle of the Christian Faith as the doctrine of the *Resurrection* is, from such an absurd and ridiculous rite used only by the *worst* of Hereticks. But this only by the way.

For the *Place* where this solemn action was performed it was at first unlimited, any place where there was *water*, as *Justin Martyr* tells us; in *Ponds*, or *Lakes*, at *Springs*, or *Rivers*, as *Tertul-  
lian* speaks; but always as near as might be to the place of their publick Assemblies, for it was seldom done without the presence of the *Congregation*, and that for very good reason, both as 'tis a principal act of religious Worship, and as 'tis the initiating of persons into the Church, which therefore ought to be as publick as it could, that so the whole *Congregation* might be spectators and witnesses of that profession and engagement which the person baptized then took upon him; and this they so zealous

De Resur.  
Carn. c. 48.

Apol. 2.  
p. 93.  
De Baptism.  
c. 4.

Part 1. lously kept to, that the *Trullan* Council allows not Baptism to be administred in a private *Chappel*, but only in the public Churches, punishing the persons offending, if Clergy with *deposition*, if Laity with *excommunication*; which yet (as both *Zonaras* and *Balsamon* expound the *Canon*) is to be understood, unless it be done with the leave and approbation of the Bishop of the *Diocess*; for this reason they had afterwards their *Baptisteria*, or as we call them *Fonts*, built at first near the Church, then in the *Church-Porch*, to represent Baptisms being the *entrance* into the mystical Church; afterwards they were placed in the Church it self: they were usually very large and capacious, not only that they might comport with the general custom of those times of persons baptized, being *immersed* or put under water, but because the stated times of Baptism returning so seldom, great multitudes were usually baptized at the same time. In the middle of the *Font* there was a *partition*, the one part for men, the other for women, that to avoid offence and scandal they might be baptized asunder. Here it was that this great rite was commonly performed, though

in cases of necessity they dispensed with Part 1. private Baptism, as in the case of those that were *sick*, or shut up in *prison*, of which there were frequent instances in times of persecution. Many there were in those days (such especially as lived in the parts near to it) whom nothing would serve, unless they might be baptized in *Jordan*, out of a reverence to that place where our *Saviour* himself had been baptized; this *Constantine* tells us he had a long time resolved upon, to be baptized in *Jordan*, though God cut him short of his desire: and *Eusebius* elsewhere relates, that at *Bethabara beyond Jordan where John baptized*, there was a place whither very many even in his time used to resort, earnestly desiring to obtain their Baptism in that place. This doubtless proceeded from a very devout and pious mind, though otherwise one place can contribute nothing more than another, nothing being truer than what *Tertullian* has observed in this case, *that it's no matter whether we be baptized amongst those whom John baptized in Jordan, or whom Peter baptized in Tyber.*

The last circumstance I propounded concerns the manner of the celebration of

De vit.  
Const. l. 4.  
c. 62.

Euseb. de  
loc. Hebr.  
in voce Bethabara.  
p. 19.

De Baptism.  
c. 4.  
p. 225.

Part I. of this Sacrament, and for this we may observe, that in the *Apostles Age* Baptism was administered with great nakedness and simplicity, probably without any more formality than a short prayer, and repeating the words of institution, and indeed it could not, well be otherwise, considering the vast numbers that many times were then baptized at once. But after ages added many rites, differing very often according to time and place; I shall not undertake to give an account of all, but only of the most remarkable, and such as did generally obtain in those times, keeping as near as I can to the order which they observed in the administration, which usually was this. Persons having past through the state of the *Catechumens*, and being now ripe for *Baptism*, made it their request to the Bishop that they might be baptized, whereupon at the solemn times they were brought to the entrance of the *Baptistery* or *Font*, and standing with their faces towards the *West* (which being directly opposite to the *East*, the place of light, did symbolically represent the Prince of darkness whom they were to renounce and despise) were commanded to stretch out their hand, as it

Cyrril. Hier.  
ref. Cathac.  
myst. 1. p.  
306. seq.  
vid. Dion.  
Areop. de  
Eccl. Hier.  
arch. c. 2.

P. 253.

were

were in defiance of him: in this posture Part I. they were interrogated by the Bishop, concerning their breaking of all their former leagues and commerce with sin, and the powers of Hell, the Bishop asking, *dost thou renounce the Devil and all his works, powers, and service?* to which the party answered, *I do renounce them: dost thou renounce the world and all its pomps and pleasures?* Answer, *I do renounce them.* This renunciation was made twice, once before the Congregation (probably at their obtaining leave to be baptized) and presently after at the Font or place of Baptism, as *Tertullian* witnesses. Next they made an open confession of their Faith, the Bishop asking, *Dost thou believe in God the Father almighty, &c. in Jesus Christ his only Son, who, &c. dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholick Church, and in one Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and life everlasting?* to all which the person answered, *I do believe.* This form of interrogation seems to have been very ancient in the Church, and the Apostle is justly thought to refer to it, when he stiles Baptism *the answer of a good conscience towards God*, which can reasonably refer

Ambros. de  
Sacram.  
lib. 1. c. 2.  
tom. 4. p.  
429.

De Coron.  
mil. c. 3.  
p. 102. de  
Spe. c. 13.  
p. 79.

Vid. Con-  
fir. Apost.  
lib. 7. c. 42.  
p. 993.



Part I. fer to nothing so well as that common custom of *answering* in Baptism. These answers and actions in the *adult* were done by the persons themselves, in *children* by their *sponsors*, as *Tertullian* calls them, their *Sureties* and undertakers; for that both Infants and adult persons had those that *undertook* for them at their Baptism, is so notoriously known, that it were impertinent to insist upon it. After this there was a kind of *Exorcism*, and an *insufflation* or breathing in the face of the person baptized (which *S. Augustine* calls a most ancient *tradition* of the Church) by which they signified the expelling of the evil spirit, and the breathing in the good Spirit of God: not that they thought that every one before Baptism was *possessed* by the Devil, but only that *we are by nature children of wrath*, enemies to God, and slaves to *Satan*. Nor did they lay any stress upon the bare usage of those Symbolick Rites, but wholly upon the Churches Prayers, which at the same time were made, that God would deliver those persons from the power of Satan, and by his Spirit unite them to the Church. This being done, they were brought to the *Font*, and were first

De Baptism.  
c. 18.  
p. 231.

De nupt.  
et concup.  
lib. 2. c. 29.  
tom. 7. col.  
856.

first stript of their *garments* (intimating Part I. thereby *their putting off the old man which is corrupt with his deceitful lusts*) and that all occasions of scandal and immodesty might be prevented in so sacred an action, the men and women (as I observed before) were baptized in their distinct *apartments*, the women having *Deaconesses* to attend them, to undress and dress them, to stand about and overshadow them, that nothing of indecency might appear; then followed the *Unction*, a Ceremony of early date, by which (says *S. Cyril*) they signified that they were now cut off from the *wild Olive*, and were *ingrafted* into Christ, the *true Olive-tree*, and made partakers of his fruits and benefits, or else to shew that now they were become *Champions* for Christ, and had entred upon a state of conflict, wherein they must strive and contend with all the snares and allurements of the world, as the *Athleta* of old were anointed against their solemn Games, that they might be more expedite, and that their *Antagonists* might take less hold upon them: or rather, probably, to denote their being admitted to the great Privileges of Christianity, a *chosen generation*, *royal Priesthood*, *an holy nation* (as

Constit. A.  
post. lib. 3.  
c. 15 p. 899  
Epiphani.  
Hæres. 79.  
p. 447. ib.  
l. 7. c. 23.  
p. 379.  
Catech. 2.  
p. 518.

Ambros. de  
Sacram. l. 4.  
l. c. 2. tom.  
4. p. 429.  
vid. Dion.  
Areop. de  
Eccles. Hi-  
erach. c. 2.  
p. 279.

**Part I.** (as the *Apostle* styles Christians) Offices of which *anointing* was an ancient Symbol, both of being designed to them, and invested in them; and this account *Tertullian* favours, where speaking of this Unction in Baptism, he tells us 'tis derived from the ancient, *i. e.* Jewish Discipline, where the Priests were wont to be *anointed* for the Priesthood: for some such purpose they thought it fit that a Christian (who carries *unction* in his very name) should be anointed as a *spiritual* King and Priest, and that no time was more proper for it, than at his Baptism, when the name of *Christian* was conferred upon him. Together with this we may suppose it was, that the *sign* of the *Cross* was made upon the forehead of the party baptized; when this Ceremony first began to be used in Baptism, I find not; *S. Basil* reckons it (and he puts it too in the first place) amongst those ancient *Customs* of the Church that had been derived from the times of the *Apostles*: that it was generally in use in the times of *Tertullian* and *Cyprian*, we have sufficient evidence from their Writings, and indeed cannot reasonably suppose they should omit it in this solemn action (where it is so proper) when they used

*De Baptif.*  
6.7. p. 226.

*De Spirit.*  
*Sand. c. 27*  
*tom. 2. p.*  
*351.*  
*Vid. Tert.*  
*adv. Marc.*  
*clon. l. 3. p.*  
*226.*  
*Cyprian. de*  
*laps. p. 169.*  
*frons cum*  
*signo, &c.*  
*de unit. ec.*  
*les. p. 185.*  
*ea parte*  
*corporis,*  
*&c. adv.*  
*Demet. p.*  
*202. rena-*  
*ti, & signo*  
*Christi sig-*  
*nati, &c.*

**Part I.** used it in the commonest actions of their lives, *Tertullian* expressly assuring us, *that upon every motion, at their going out and coming in, at their going to bath, or to bed, or to meals, or whatever their employment or occasions called them to, they were wont* frontem signaculo terere, *to make the sign of the Cross upon their forehead; and this they did (as he there tells us) not that it was imposed upon them by any Law of Christ, but brought in by a pious custom, as that which did very much tend to strengthen and increase their faith. By this they shewed, that they were not ashamed of the Cross of Christ, nor unwilling to ingage in the service of a crucified Master, which yet was so great a scandal to the Heathen-World, and therefore so often triumphed in this Symbol and Representation of it. Thus S. Hierom, though he lived in a time when Christianity had almost quite prevailed over all other Religions in the World, yet counted this the great matter of his glory, that I am (says he) a Christian, that I was born of Christian Parents, and do carry in my forehead the Banner of the Cross. And indeed so great a respect did they bear to this Representation of our Saviours death, that* (though

*De Coron.*  
*Milit. c. 3.*  
*p. 102. vid.*  
*Cyrl. ad*  
*illum. Ca-*  
*tech. 4. p.*  
*81.*

*Præfat. in*  
*Joh. tom. 3.*  
*p. 24.*

Part 1. (though they did not *worship* the Cross, yet) they took care that it should not be put to any mean and trivial uses, be painted or made upon the *ground*, or engraven upon *Marble Pavements*, or any thing where it might be trampled upon, as is expressly provided by a Law of *Theodosius* and *Valentinian*.

Lib. 1. C.  
Justin. Tit.  
8. L. unic.

The action having proceeded thus far, the party to be baptized was wholly *immersed* or put under water, which was the almost constant and universal custom of those times, whereby they did more notably and significantly express the *three great ends and effects* of Baptism; for as in immersion there are in a manner three several acts, the *putting* the person into water, his *abiding* there for a little time, and his *rising* up again; so by these were represented Christs *death*, *burial*, and *resurrection*, and in conformity thereunto our *dying* unto sin, the *destruction* of its power, and our *resurrection* to a new course of life; by the persons being put into water was lively represented the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, and being washed from the filth and pollution of them; by his abode under it, which was a kind of burial in the water, his entering into a state

Part 1. state of death or mortification, like as *Christ* remained for some time under the state or power of death, therefore *as many as are baptized into Christ*, are said to be *baptized into his death*, and to be *buried with him by Baptism into death*, that the old man being crucified with him, the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth he might not serve sin, for that he that is dead is freed from sin, as the Apostle clearly explains the meaning of this rite: and then by his *emersion*, or rising up out of the water, was signified his entering upon a new course of life, differing from that which he lived before, that like as *Christ* was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. But though by reason of the more eminent significancy of these things, *immersion* was the common practice in those days, and therefore they earnestly urged it and pleaded for it, yet did they not hold *sprinkling* to be unlawful, especially in cases of necessity, as of weakness, danger of death, or where convenience of immersing could not be had, in these and such like cases *Cyprian* does not only allow, but plead for it, and that in a discourse on purpose, when

Ep. 96. ad  
Magn. p.  
153.

Part 1. the question concerning it was put to him. Upon this account it is that immersion is now generally disused in these parts of the world, and sprinkling succeeded in its room, because the tender bodies of most Infants (the only persons now baptized) could not be put under water in these cold Northern Climates without apparent prejudice to their health, if not their lives; and therefore in this as in other cases, *God requires mercy rather than sacrifice*, especially considering that the main ends of Baptism are attained this way, and the mystical effects of it as *truly*, though not so *plainly* and significantly represented, by sprinkling, as by putting the body under water.

This immersion was performed *thrice*, the person baptized being three several times put under water, a custom which *Basila* and *Sozomon* will have derived from the Apostles; 'tis certain that it was very early in the Church, being twice mentioned by *Tertullian* as the common practice. By this trine immersion they signified (say some) their distinct adorning the three persons in the *blessed Trinity*, and therefore the custom was, in repeating the words of institution, at the

the naming of every person, the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*, to plunge the party under water, as *Tertullian* tells us, and *S. Ambrose* more expressly. 'Twas done (say others) to represent the *death*, *burial*, and *resurrection* of our Saviour, together with his *three days* continuance in the Grave; *S. Augustine* joins both these together as the double mystery of this ancient rite, as he is cited by *Gratian* to this purpose. It cannot be denied but that the Ceremony is very significant and expressive, and accordingly the Ancients laid great weight upon it, insomuch that the *Canons* that go under the name of *Apostolical* command him, whether Bishop or Presbyter, that baptizes any without the *trine immersion*, to be *deposed* from his Ministry. But though this custom was in a manner universal, yet in some places (in after times especially) it was otherwise, particularly in *Spain*, where they used it but *once*, lest they should gratify the *Arrians*, who made use of the trine immersion to denote the persons in the Trinity to be three distinct *substances*, and gloried that the *Catholics* did, and held the same with them. Upon this account they were content to immerge but once;

Part 1. and when differences and controversies did still remain about it, the fourth Council of *Toledo* out of a Letter of *Gregory the great* thus determined the case, that they should still use their *single* immersion, and that this would sufficiently express the mysteries of Baptism, the diving under water would denote Christ's death and descending into Hell, the coming out *his resurrection*: the single immersion would express the *unity* of the Godhead; while the *Trinity* of persons would be sufficiently denoted by the persons being baptized *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*. The person baptized being come out of the water was *anointed* a second time, as *S. Cyril* tells us; and indeed whatever becomes of the unction that was before, 'tis certain that that which *Tertullian* speaks of as a part of the ancient discipline, was after the person was baptized; which being done, he had a *white Garment* put upon him, to denote his having put off the *lusts* of the flesh, his being *washed* from the filth and defilement of his former sins, and his resolution to maintain a life of *unspotted* innocence and purity, according to that solemn and strict engagement which in Baptism he had

De Bap-  
tism. c. 7.  
p. 276.  
Cyrill. Ca-  
tech. 4 p.  
231.  
Johannes a-  
pud Phot.  
Cod. 222.  
c. 18. col.  
597.  
Ambros. de  
its qui my-  
ster. iniii.  
ant. c. 7.  
tom. 4. p.  
425.

had taken upon him. In this they allude- Part 1.  
ed to that of the Apostle, *that as many as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, i. e.* have engaged in that strict and holy course of life, which he both by his doctrine and example has left to the world: accordingly persons baptized are both by the Apostle, and by the Greek Fathers frequently called *φωτισμένοι*, or *the enlightened*, because they now professed that they were become *the children of the light and of the day*, and would not return to *works of darkness* any more; and this as they expected mercy from *Christ* at the great day; therefore the white Garment was wont to be delivered to them with such a charge as this, *Receive the white and im-* Gregor. Sa-  
*maculate garment, and bring it forth with-* cramentar.  
*out spot before the tribunal of our Lord* inter Li-  
*Jesus Christ, that thou mayst have eternal* turgic. La-  
*life. Amen.* From the wearing of these tinor. tom. 2  
white Vestments (as we have observed p. 269. vid.  
before) *Pentecost* (which was one of the Eucholog.  
two annual times for Baptism) came to Grec. in  
be called *Whitesunday*, as also the *Offic. S.*  
Sunday after *Easter* (which was the other *Baptism.*  
time) *Dominica in Albis*, because then p. 357.  
they laid this *white Robe* aside; for it was  
the custom for persons baptized to wear  
Y 3 this

**Part 1.** this Garment for a whole week after they were baptized, and then to put it off, and lay it up in the Church, that it might be kept as an evidence against them, if they violated or denied that *Faith* which they had owned in Baptism; whereof we have a memorable instance under the *Arrian* persecution in *Africk*. *Elpidophorus* a Citizen of *Carthage* had lived a long time in the communion of the Church, but apostatizing afterwards to the *Arrians*, became a most bitter and implacable persecutor of the *Orthodox* party: amongst others whom he summoned to be put to the Rack, was one *Miritas* a venerable old *Deacon* (who had been the *Undertaker* for him at his Baptism) who being ready to be put upon the Rack, plucked out the *white* Vestment wherewith *Elpidophorus* had been clothed at his Baptism, and with tears in his eyes thus openly bespake him before all the people: *These, Elpidophorus, thou minister of error, these are the Garments that shall accuse thee, when thou shalt appear before the majesty of the great Judge; these I will diligently keep as a testimony of that ruine, that shall depress thee down into the lake the burns with fire and brimstone; these*  
are

*Victor.  
Diss. de  
persecut.  
Vand. lib.  
3. fol. 43.*

*are they that were girt upon thee, when thou camest pure out of the holy Font; and these are they that shall bitterly pursue thee when thou shalt be cast into the place of flames; because thou hast clothed thy self with cursing, as with a Garment, and hast cast off the sacred obligation of thy Baptism, and the true faith which thou didst then profess and take upon thee.* These were the main and most considerable circumstances wherewith *Baptism* was administered in the primitive Church; some whereof were by degrees antiquated and disused, other rites there were that belonged only to particular Churches, and which, as they were suddenly taken up, so were as quickly laid aside; others were added in after-times, till they encreased so fast, that the usage and the number of them became absurd and burdensom, as may appear by the office for Baptism in the *Romish Ritual* at this day.

As a conclusion to this Chapter, I had once thought to have treated concerning **Confirmation**, which ever was a constant appendage to Baptism, and had noted some things to that purpose; but shall supersede that labour, finding it so often, and so fully done by others in just  
discourses,

**Part 1.** discourses, that nothing considerable can be added to them; only I shall give this brief and general account of it: all persons baptized in the ancient Church (according to their age and capacity, persons *adult*, some little time after Baptism, *children*, when arrived to years of competent ripeness and maturity) were brought to the Bishop, there further to *confirm* and ratify that *compact* which they had made with God in Baptism, and by some solemn acts of his ministry to be themselves *confirmed* and strengthened, by having the *grace* and blessing of God conferred upon them, to enable them to discharge that great promise and engagement which they had made to God. This was usually performed with the Ceremony of *Unction*, the person confirmed being anointed by the Bishop, or in his absence by an inferior Minister; and indeed *Unction* was an ancient rite used in the *Jewish* Church to denote the conferring of gifts or graces upon persons, and thence probably amongst other reasons (as many other usages were) might be derived into the *Christian* Church; though a *learned* man is of opinion, that *unction* was never used in *confirmation*, but where

Hen. Vales.  
Annot. ad  
Enseb. Hist.  
Eccles. p.  
135. col. 1.

where the person being in case of necessity baptized by some of the inferior Clergy had not been before anointed; otherwise those who had received compleat Baptism, were not afterwards anointed at their confirmation, for which the Council of *Orange* is most express *Can. 1.* and clear. And indeed that Confirmation was often administered without this *unction*, no man can doubt that knows the state of those times, being done only by solemn *imposition* of the Bishops hands, and by devout and pious prayers, that the persons confirmed might *grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ*, and be enabled to perform those vows and purposes, and that profession of Faith which they had before embraced in Baptism, and then again owned before the whole Congregation. Till this was done, they were not accounted *compleat Christians*, nor admitted to the holy *Communion*, nor could challenge any actual right to those great privileges of *Christianity*, whence it is that the Ancients so often speak of Confirmation as that which did *perfect* and consummate *Christians*, as being a means to confer greater measures of that grace that was but begun in Baptism; upon all which accounts, and

Part I. and almost exactly according to the primitive usage, it is still retained and practised in our own Church at this day : and happy were it for us, were it kept up in its due power and vigour ; sure I am, 'tis too plain that many of our unhappy breaches and controversies in Religion do (if not wholly, in a great measure) owe their birth and rise to the neglect and contempt of this excellent usage of the Church.

## CHAP. XI.

### Of the Lords Supper, and the administration of it in the ancient Church.

*The persons dispensing this Ordinance, who. The persons Communicating, the Baptized or the Faithful : Suspension from this Ordinance according to the nature of the offence. The Eucharist sent home to them that could not be present. The case of Serapion. A custom in some places to give the Sacrament to persons when dead, if they dyed before they could receive it, and why. The Eucharist*  
kept

*kept by persons at home. Sent abroad. Part I. This laid aside, and in its stead Eulogia or pieces of consecrated Bread sent from one Church to another, as tokens of communion. The time of its administration : sometimes in the morning, sometimes at night : varied according to the peace they enjoyed. How oft they received the Eucharist. At first every day. This continued in Cyprian's time. Four times a week. Afterwards less frequented. The usual place of receiving, the Church : ordinarily, not lawful to consecrate it elsewhere. Oblations made by persons before their communicating. Their Agapæ or Love-Feasts what. Whether before or after the Sacrament. How long continued in the Church. The manner of celebrating this Sacrament, collected out of the most ancient Authors. The holy Kiss. The general prayer for the Church, and the whole world. The consecration of the Sacrament : the form of it out of S. Ambrose. The Bread common Bread. The sacramental Wine mixed with Water. This no necessary part of the institution. Why probably used in those Countries. The posture of receiving not always the same. Singing Psalms during the time of celebration.*  
Followed



Part 1. Followed with prayer and thanksgiving.  
The whole action concluded with the  
Kiss of peace.

THE holy Eucharist or Supper of our Lord being a rite so solemnly instituted, and of such great importance in the Christian Religion had place accordingly amongst the Ancients in their publick offices and devotions. In speaking to which I shall much what observe the same method I did in treating concerning Baptism, considering the persons, the time, the place, and the manner of its celebration. The persons administering were the ordinary Pastors and Governours of the Church, those who were set apart for the ministration of holy offices; the institution was begun by our Lord himself, and the administration of it by him committed to his Apostles and to their ordinary successors, to the end of the world. We find in Tertullian, that they never received it from any but the hand of the President; which must either be meant of the particular custom of that Church where he lived, or of consecration only; for otherwise the custom was when the Bishop or President had by solemn Prayers and blessings consecrated the

De Cor.  
mil c. 3.  
p. 102.

the sacramental elements, for the Deacons to distribute them to the people, as well to those that were absent as to them that were present, as Justin Martyr expressly affirms, and as the custom generally was afterwards. For the persons communicating at this Sacrament, at first the whole Church, or body of Christians, within such a space, that had embraced the doctrine of the Gospel, and been baptized into the faith of Christ, used constantly to meet together at the Lords Table. As Christians multiplied, and a more exact discipline became necessary, none were admitted to this ordinance till they had arrived at the degree of the Faithful, for who ever were in the state of the Catechumens, i.e. under instruction in order to their Baptism, or by reason of any hainous crime under the censures and suspension of the Church, and not yet passed through the several stages of the Penitents, might not communicate, and were therefore commanded to depart the Church, when the rest went to the celebration of the Sacrament: for looking upon the Lords Supper as the highest and most solemn act of Religion, they thought they could never take care enough in the dispensing of it; accordingly

Part 1.

Apol. 2.  
p. 97.

Part I. cordingly who ever was found guilty of any *scandalous* fault, was according to the nature of the offence debarred the Communion a shorter or a longer time, and sometimes all their life, not to be reconciled and taken into the communion of the Church, till they had continued their repentance to their death-bed. As for those persons that could not be present, either through distance of place, sickness, or any other just cause, the *Eucharist* was wont to be sent *home* to them, some little pieces of the *consecrated* bread *dip't* in the sacramental *Cup*, which were usually carried by the *Deacon* or some inferior Officer of the Church, or in cases of necessity by any other person; as in the case of *Serapion*, of whom *Dionysius* of *Alexandria* relates, that having been all his life a good man, at last *lapsed* in a time of persecution, and though he oft desired reconciliation, yet none would communicate with him; not long after he was seized upon by a mortal sickness, depriv'd of the use of his speech and senses, but coming to himself after four days, he sends his Nephew a little Boy late at night for one of the *Presbyters* to come to him; the Minister was at that time sick, but considering

Apud Eu-  
seb. Hist.  
Eccles. l. 6.  
c. 44. p.  
246.

considering the exigence of the case, Part I. gives the Boy a little piece of the *Eucharist*, bids him to *moisten* it with a little water, and so give it him in his mouth, which he did, and immediately the old man chearfully departed this life. For the better understanding of which, we are to observe, that those who had lapsed into Idolatry, were to undergo a very long time of penance, and were not many times admitted to the Communion, till they were near their death; and because it sometimes hapned that they were overtaken with sudden death, before the Sacrament could be administred to them, thence a custom sprung up to give it them *after* they were *dead*, which they did doubtless upon this ground, that they might give some kind of evidence, that those persons died in the *peace* and *communion* of the Church, though this usage was afterwards by many *Councils* abrogated and laid aside. I take no notice in this place of their giving the *Eucharist* to *new-baptized Infants*, the case being so commonly known and obvious. In those early times nothing was more common than for Christians either to carry, or to have sent to them some parts of the *Eucharist*,

Vid. Conc.  
3. Carth.  
Can. 6:  
Conc. 6. in  
Trull. Can.  
83.

Part 1. *charist*, which they kept in some decent place in their houses against all emergent occasions, especially to *fortifie* and strengthen their faith in times of persecution, and to *encrease* kindness and amity with one another; whence one that was well versed in *Church-Antiquities*, conjectures that when ever they entertained Friends or Strangers, they used before every meal first to give them some parts of the holy *Eucharist*, as being the greatest *badge*, the strongest *band* of true love and friendship in the world. Besides these parcels of the sacramental Elements, there were wont at the celebration of the Communion to be pieces of bread (which remained of the Offerings of the people) which being solemnly *blessed* by the Bishop, might be given to those who had no right to be at the *Lords Table*, as to the *Catechumens*, and such like, and were to them instead of the Sacrament: These pieces were properly called *Eulogia*, because set apart by solemn *benediction*, and were sent up and down the Towns and Villages round about, to testify and represent their mutual union and fellowship with one another; nay and sometimes from Churches in one Country to those

Joa. Front.  
Epist. de  
philosophi-  
cis Veter.  
p. 6.

those that were in another; which was also done by the *Eucharist* it self: for so *Irenæus* in a Letter to Pope *Victor* tells us, that the Ministers of Churches, though differing in some little circumstances, did yet use to send the *Eucharist* to one another. Which custom is also taken notice of by *Zonaras*; but because the carrying the Sacramental Elements up and down the World, was thought not so well to consist with the reverence and veneration that is due to this solemn Ordinance, therefore it was abolished by the *Laodicean Synod*, and these *Eulogia* or pieces of bread appointed at *Easter* to be sent up and down in their room.

For the *Time*, the next circumstance, when they met together for this solemn Action, it was in general at their publick Assemblies, on the *Lords day* always or the first day of the week, as we find it in the History of the *Apostles Acts*, besides other days, and especially *Saturday*, on which day all the Churches in the World (those of *Rome* only and *Alexandria* excepted) used to celebrate this Sacrament, as the *Historian* informs us. What time of the day they took to do it, is not altogether so certain; our blessed *Saviour* and his *Apostles* celebrated it at *night* at the time of the *Jewish Pass-*

Part 1.  
Euseb. H.  
Ecl. lib.  
5. c. 23.  
p. 193.

Can. 14.

Socrat. lib.  
5. c. 22. p.  
286.

Part I. over; but whether the *Apostles* and their immediate Successors punctually observed this circumstance may be doubted; 'tis probable that the holy *Eucharist* which *S. Paul* speaks of in the Church of *Corinth* was solemnized in the *morning*, the *Apostles* calling it a *Supper* (as *Chrysostom* thinks) not because 'twas done in the *evening*, but the more effectually to put them in mind of the time when our *Lord* did institute those holy Mysteries. *Tertullian* assures us in his time 'twas done *in tempore victus*, about *Supper-time* (as all understand him) and very often in the morning *before day*, when they held their religious Assemblies, of which *Pliny* also takes notice in his Letter to the *Emperour*: for in those times of Persecution, when they were hunted out by the inquisitive malice of their enemies, they were glad of the remotest corners, the most unseasonable hours when they could meet to perform the joynt offices of Religion. But this communicating at evening or at night either lasted only during the extreme heats of Persecution, or at least wore off apace; for *Cyprian* expressly pleads against it, affirming that it ought to be in the *morning*, and so indeed in a short time it prevailed over most parts of the World,

except

In Loc.

De Cor.  
mil. c. 3.  
p. 102.Lib. 10.  
Ep. 97.Ad Cecil.  
Epist. 63.  
p. 104.

except in some places of *Egypt*, near Part I. *Alexandria*, of which *Socrates* tells us, that after they had sufficiently feasted <sup>U<sup>r</sup> Supr. p. 287.</sup> themselves in the evening, they were wont to receive the Sacrament. Under this circumstance of time we may take occasion to consider, how *oft* in those days they usually met at this table. And at first (while the *spirit* of Christianity was yet warm and vigorous, and the hearts of men passionately inflamed with the love of *Christ*) 'tis more than probable they communicated *every day*; or as oft as they came together for publick Worship, insomuch that the *Canons Apostolical* and the Synod of *Antioch* threaten every one of the Faithful with Excommunication, who came to Church to hear the holy Scriptures, but stay not to *participate* of the *Lords Supper*: the eye of their minds was then almost wholly fixed upon the memory of their *crucified Saviour*, and the oftner they fed at his table, the stronger and healthier they found themselves, and the more able to encounter with those fierce oppositions that were made against them. This custom of receiving the Sacrament *every day* continued some considerable time in the Church, though in some places longer than in others, especially in

Canig. Conc.  
cil. Anti-  
och. Can. 2.Vid Ep.  
Cyp. ad  
Thabo it.  
Ep. 56 cir-  
ca init. p.  
87.

Part I. the *Western Churches*; from *Cyprian* we are fully assured 'twas so in his time, *We receive the Eucharist every day* (says he) as *the food that nourishes us to Salvation*. The like *S. Ambrose* seems to intimate of *Milan*, whereof he was Bishop, nay and after him *S. Hierom* tells us, 'twas the custom of the Church of *Rome*, and *S. Augustine* seems pretty clearly to intimate, that it was not unusual in his time. In the Churches of the *East* this custom wore off sooner, though more or less according as the primitive zeal did abate and decay; *S. Basil* telling us that in his time they communicated *four times* a week, on the *Lords-day, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday*, yea and upon other days too, if the *memory* or festival of any Martyr fell upon them. Afterwards as the power of Religion began more sensibly to decline, and the commonness of the thing begat some contempt (*Manna* it self was *sighted*, after once it was rained down every day) this Sacrament was more rarely frequented, and from once a day it came to once or twice a week, and then fell to once a month, and after for the most part to *thrice a year* at the three great Solemnities, of *Christmas, Easter, and Whitsontide*; to so great a coldness and indifferency did the piety and devotion

*De Orat.*  
*Dom. p.*  
*192.*  
*De Sacram.*  
*lib. 5. c. 4. p.*  
*449. tom. 4.*  
*Ad Jovian. p. 108*  
*tom. 2.*  
  
*De Serm.*  
*Dom. in*  
*mont. lib. 2.*  
*tom. 4. col.*  
*1147. &*  
*Ep. 118.*  
*ad Januar.*  
*c. 3. col.*  
*557.*  
*Basil. Ep.*  
*289 ad*  
*Casariam.*  
*Patrit.*  
*tom. 3. p.*  
*279.*

devotion of *Christians* grow, after once the true primitive temper and spirit of the Gospel had left the World.

Concerning the third circumstance, the *Place* where this holy Supper was kept, much need not be said, it being a main part of their publick Worship always performed in the place of their religious Assemblies. 'Twas instituted by our *Saviour* in a private house, because of its *Analogie* to the *Jewish Passover*, and because the necessity of that time would not otherwise admit; by the Apostles and Christians with them 'twas celebrated in the houses of Believers, generally in an *upper room*, set apart by the bounty of some Christian for the uses of the Church, and which (as I have formerly proved) was the constant *separate* place of religious Worship for all the Christians that dwelt thereabouts. Under the severities of great persecutions they were forced to fly to the *mountains*, or to their *Cryptæ* or *Vaults* under ground, and to celebrate this Sacrament at the *Tombs* of Martyrs; and over the *Asbes* of the dead. Churches growing up into some beauty and regularity, several parts of the divine offices began to have several places assigned to them, the Communion-service being removed to the up-  
Z 3 per

Part I. per or East end of the Church, and there performed upon a table of wood, which afterwards was changed into one of stone, and both of them not uncommonly, though *metaphorically*, by the Fathers styled *Altars*; and the *Eucharist* it self, in later times especially, the *Sacrament* of the *Altar*. This place was called *bovachem*, and was fenced in with *Rails*, within which the *Clergie* received the *Sacrament*; as the *Laitie* did without. Here it was that they all used to meet at this heavenly Banquet, for out of this place they allowed not the celebration of the *Sacrament* (a thing expressly forbidden by the *Luddicean Council*) unless in cases of great necessity; and therefore 'twas one of the principal Articles for which the Synod of *Gangra* deposed *Eustathius* from his *Bishoprick*, that he kept *private Meetings*, perswading some that were averse to the *publick Assemblies* of the Church, that they might communicate and receive the *Sacrament* at *home*.

Socrat. lib.  
2. c. 43 p.  
156. &  
Concil.  
Gangr.  
Can. 5. 6.

We come last of all to consider the *Manner* how the *Eucharist* was celebrated in the ancient Church; but before we describe that, we are to take notice, that after the Service of the *Catechumens*, and before the beginning of that of the *Faithful*, at which the *Eucharist* was administered, the

the custom was to present their *offerings*, every one according to his ability bringing some gift as the *first-fruits* of his increase, which was by the Minister laid upon the *Altar* or *Communion-table*, none of them then thinking it fit to appear before the Lord empty, and therefore *S. Cyprian* severely chides a rich Widow of his time, who came without giving any thing to the *poor mans Box*, and did partake of their *offerings*, without bringing any *offering* of her own. These *Oblations* were designed to the uses of the Church, for the maintenance of the Ministry, and the relief of the Poor, especially out of them were taken the *Bread* and the *Wine* for the *Sacramental Elements*, the bread being no other than *common bread*, such as served for their ordinary uses, there being then no notice taken of what has for so many hundred years, and still is to this day fiercely disputed between the *Greek* and the *Latine Church*, whether it ought to be leavened or unleavened bread. Out of these oblations also 'tis probable they took (at least sent provisions extraordinary) to furnish the *common Feast*, which in those days they constantly had at the celebration of the *Sacrament*, where the rich and the poor feasted together at the

Part I.  
*Irenaus*  
*adv. Her.*  
*lib. 4. c. 34.*  
*p. 362.*  
*J. Martyr.*  
*Ap. 2. p. 98.*

*De oper. &*  
*elem. syn.*  
*p. 218.*

Part I. same Table. These were called *Agape* or *Love-feasts* (mentioned by S. Jude, and plainly enough intimated by S. Paul) because hereat they testified and confirmed their mutual love and kindness, a thing never more proper than at the celebration of the *Lords Supper*; which is not only a *Seal* of our peace with God, but a *sign* and a pledge of our Communion and fellowship with one another. Whether this Banquet was *before* or *after* the celebration of the *Eucharist*, is not easie to determine; 'tis probable, that in the *Apostles* time, and the Age after them, it was *before* it, in imitation of our *Saviours* institution, who celebrated the Sacrament after supper, and S. Paul taxing the abuses of the Church of *Corinth* reproves them, *That when they came together for the Lords Supper, they did not one tarry for another, but every one took his own supper, i.e.* that provision which he had brought from home for the common feast. which was devoured with great irregularity and excess, some eating and drinking all they brought, others (the poor especially that came late) having nothing left, *one being hungry and another drunken*; all this, 'tis plain, was done before the celebration of the *Eucharist*, which was never administred till the

the wole Church met together. That Part I. therefore which the *Apostle* reproves and corrects, is their indecency and intemperance, commanding both rich and poor to *wait for one another*, and to eat this common meal together, that they might the more orderly and unanimously pass to the celebration of the *Lords Supper*. In after Ages this Feast was not till the Communion was over, when the Congregation feasted together, and so departed, and so *Chrysostom* expressly tells *Homil. 27. in 1. ad Corinth. p. 559.* us 'twas in his days; besides, nothing is more obvious, than that it was customary in those times for persons to *fast*, till they had received the Communion. I know a very learned man is of opinion, *Albas. de rit. Eccles. obs. 18. p. 135.* that these *Love-feasts* were not kept at the same time with the celebration of the *Eucharist*; but besides that his Arguments are not conclusive, the whole stream of learned Writers runs full against him. These Feasts continued for some Ages, till great inconveniences being found in them they were prohibited to be kept in Churches by the *Laodicean Synod*, and after that by the Council of *Carthage*; which though but Provincial or National Councils, yet the Decrees were afterwards ratified by the sixth *Trullan Council*, and the *Can. 74.* custom in a short time dwindled into nothing. These

**Part I.** These things being premised, the sacramental elements prepared, and all things ready, they proceeded to the action it self, which (following for the main the account that is given us by S. *Cyrril of Jerusalem*, and taking in what we find in others) was usually managed after this manner: First the *Deacon* brought water to the *Bishop* and the *Presbyters* that stood round about the Table to wash their hands, signifying the *purity* that ought to be in those that draw nigh to God, according to that of the *Psalmist*, *I will wash my hands in innocency, and so will I compass thine Altar, O Lord*; then the *Deacon* cryed out aloud, *mutually embrace and kiss one another*; this *holy kiss* was very ancient, commonly used in the Apostles times, and in the succeeding Ages of the Church, but especially at the Sacrament, as a sign of the unfeigned *reconciliation* of their minds, and that all injuries and offences were blotted out, according to our *Lords* command, *When thou bringest thy gift to the Altar, and rememberest that thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift*; this being done, they fell to prayer, the whole Congregation praying together with the Minister

Minister (which therefore *Justin Martyr* Præf. I. calls the *Common Prayer*, the form where- of in the *Apostolical Constitutions* is described at large) for the *universal peace* and welfare of the Church, for the *tranquillity and quietness of the world*, for the *prosperity of the age*, for *wholesome weather and fruitful seasons*, for all sorts of *persons*, for *Kings and Emperours*, and *all in authority*, for *Souldiers and Armies*, for *believers and unbelievers*, for *friends and companions*, for the *sick and distressed*, and in short for all that stood in need of help. This general prayer is frequently mentioned by the ancient Fathers; as that which was at the beginning of the Communion Service, though S. *Cyrril* place it a little later, as doubtless it was in his time. After this followed the mutual salutation of the minister and people, the Minister saying *the Lord be with you*, to whom the People answered, *and with thy spirit*; the Minister cryed, *lift up your hearts* (nothing being more suitable says S. *Cyrril* at this time, than that we should shake off all worldly cares, and exalt our hearts to God in heaven) the people truly assenting and yielding to it, answered, *we lift them up unto the Lord*; the Minister proceeded, *let us give thanks unto the Lord* (for what more fit than thank-



Part I. thankfulness to God, and a high resentment of such favours and blessings) to this the people returned, *it is meet and just so to do*: Whereupon the Minister proceeded to the prayer of Consecration (the form whereof we have in the *Apostolical Constitutions*) wherein he express'd huge thankfulness to God for the death, resurrection, and ascension of his Son, for the shedding of his blood for us, and the celebration of it in this Sacrament; for condescending to admit them to such mighty benefits, and praying for a closer unity to one another in the same mystical body, concluding usually with the *Lords Prayer*, and the hearty and universal acclamation of *Amen*, by all that were present: this done, the Minister cryed out *TA AGIA TOIZ AGIOIZ* *holy things belong to holy persons*; the people answering, *there is one holy, one Lord Jesus Christ*; then he exhorted them to a due participation of the holy mysteries, which *Cyrril* tells us was done by way of a divine Hymn, singing, *come taste and see that the Lord is good*.

After this the *Bishop* or *Presbyter* took the sacramental elements, sanctified then by a solemn benediction: the form of consecration we have in *S. Ambrose*; *Lord, make this oblation now prepared for*

*De Sacrament. lib. 4. c. 5. p. 439.*

*Lib. 7. c. 26. p. 979.*

*J. Mart. ib. p. 98.*

*Cyrril. p. 541.*

*Constit. Apost. lib. 8. c. 13. p. 1022.*

*ib. p. 545.*

us, to become a reasonable and acceptable Part I. sacrifice; this, which is the figure of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who the day before he suffered took the bread in his sacred hands, looked up to heaven, giving thanks to thee, O holy Father, almighty and everlasting God; blessed it, and having broken it gave it to his Apostles and Disciples, saying, *Take, eat all of it, for this is my body which is broken for many*: likewise also after Supper he took the Cup, that very day before he suffered, looked up to heaven, giving thanks to thee, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God; and having blessed it, gave it to his Apostles and Disciples, saying, *Take and drink ye all of it, for this is my blood*. After this he first brake the bread, and delivering it to the Deacon, he distributed it to the Communicants; and after that the Cup, which was likewise delivered to them, for the custom of communicating under one kind only, as is used in the Church of Rome, was then unknown to the world, nay and for above a thousand years after Christ. In some cases 'tis true they dipt the Bread in the Wine, as in the case of baptized infants, to whom they administered the Eucharist in those primitive times, and to very weak dying persons,

who

*J. Mart. ubi supr.*

Part I. who would not otherwise have swallowed the bread; and that by this means they might keep the Sacrament at home against all emergent occasions; and this probably might in time make the way easier for introducing the Sacrament under the kind of Bread only. Their sacramental Wine was generally diluted and mixed with *water*, as is evident from *Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Cyprian*, and others; *Cyprian* in a long Epistle expressly pleads for it, as the only true and warrantable tradition, derived from *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and endeavours to find out many *mystical* significations intended by it, and seems to intimate as if he had been peculiarly *warned* of God to observe it according to that manner; an *argument* which that good man often produces as his warrant to knock down a controverſie, when other arguments were too weak to do it. But although it should be granted that our *Saviour* did so use it in the institution of the Supper (the Wines of those *Eastern* Countries being very *strong* and *generous*, and that our *Saviour*, as all sober and temperate persons, might probably abate its strength with water, of which nevertheless the History of the Gospel is wholly silent) yet this being a thing in it self

*indiffe-*

*U. sup.*  
*Iren. lib. 4.*  
*c. 57. lib. 5.*  
*c. 2.*  
*Ad Gacil.*  
*Ep. 63.*  
*p. 100.*

*Ib. p. 105.*

*indifferent* and accidental, and no way Part II. *necessary* to the Sacrament, could not be obligatory to the Church, but might either be done or let alone. The posture wherein they received it was not always the same; the *Apostles* at the institution of it by our *Saviour* received it (according to the custom of the *Jews* at meals at that time) *lying along* on their sides upon Beds round about the Table; how long this way of receiving lasted, I find not; in the time of *Dionysius Alexandrinus* the custom was to *stand* at the *Lords* Table, as he intimates in a Letter to Pope *Xystus*; other gestures being taken in as the prudence and piety of the Governours of the Church judged most decent and comely for such a solemn action; the Bread and Wine were delivered into the *hands* of those that communicated, and not as the superstition of after-ages brought in, *injected* or thrown into their *mouths*. *Cyrill* tells us that in his time they used to stretch out their *right* hand, putting their *left* hand under it, either to prevent any of the sacramental Bread from falling down, or as some would have it, hereby to shadow out a kind of figure of a *Cross*.

*Apud Euseb. H. Eccl. lib. 7. c. 9. p. 255.*

*Pol. 545.*

*Vid. Conc. 6 in Trull. Can. 101.*

During the time of administration, which in populous Congregations was

no

Part I. no little time, they sung *Hymns* and *Psalms* (the compiler of the *Apostolical Constitutions* particularly mentions the 33. Psalm) which being done, the whole action was solemnly concluded with prayer and thanksgiving, (the form whereof is likewise set down by the Author of the *Apostolical Constitutions*) that God had thought them worthy to participate of such sacred mysteries, and the people being blessed by the Bishop or the Minister of the Assembly, and having again saluted each other with a *Kiss of Peace*, as a testimony of their hearty love and kindness (whence *Tertullian* calls this Kiss *signaculum Orationis*, the Seal of Prayer) the Assembly broke up, and they returned to their own houses. This for the main was the order wherein the first *Christians* celebrated this holy Sacrament; for though I do not pretend to set down every thing in that precise and punctual order wherein they were always done (and how should I, when they often varied according to *time* and *place*?) yet I doubt not but who ever examines the usages of those times, will find that 'tis done as near as the nature of the thing would bear.

Lib. 8. c. 13

p. 1023.

Videsis Di-

gn. Areop.

de Eccl.

Hierarch.

c. 3. p. 284.

Lib. 7. c. 27

p. 980. &amp;

Lib. 8. c. 15.

Cyr. p. 546.

De Orat.

c. 14.

*The end of the first Part.*



## Primitive Christianity;

OR, THE  
RELIGION  
OF THE

## Ancient Christians

In the first Ages of the Gospel.

### PART II.

*The Religion of the Primitive  
Christians as to those Vertues  
that respect themselves.*

### CHAP. I.

Of their Humility.

*This second branch of Religion compre-  
hended under the notion of Sobriety,  
and discovered in some great instances*

A

of

of it. The proper tendency of the Christian Religion to beget humility. This divine Temper eminently visible in the first Christians: made good out of their writings. The great humility and self-denial of Cyprian. What Nazianzen reports to this purpose of his own Father. Their modest declining that just commendation that was due to them. Many who suffered, refus'd the honourable title of Martyrs: Nazianzen's vindication of them against the suggestions of Julian the Apostate. The singular meekness and condescension of Nebridius amidst all his honours and relations at Court. Their stooping to the vilest Offices, and for the meanest persons: dressing and ministering to the sick, washing the Saints feet, kissing the Martyrs chains. The remarkable humility of Placilla the Empreß, and the Lady Paula. An excellent discourse of Gregory Nyssen's against Pride.

**N**Ext to Piety towards God, succeeds that part of Religion that immediately respects our selves, expressed by the Apostle under the general name of Sobriety, or the keeping our selves within those bounds and

and measures which God has set us, Part 2. Vertues, for which the Primitive Christians were no less renowned than for the other: Amongst them I shall take notice of their Humility, their contempt of the World, their temperance and sobriety, their courage and constancy, and their exemplary patience under sufferings. To begin with the first.

Humility is a vertue that seems more proper to the Gospel; for though Philosophers now and then spake a few good words concerning it; yet it found no real entertainment in their lives, being generally *animalia gloriæ*, creatures pufft up with wind and emptiness; and that sacrific'd only to their own praise and honour: whereas the doctrines of the Gospel immediately tend to level all proud and swelling apprehensions, to plant the world with mildness and modesty, and to cloath men with humility, and the ornament of a meek and a quiet spirit: By these we are taught to dwell at home, and to converse more familiarly with our selves, to be acquainted with our own deficiencies and imperfections, and rather to admire others than to advance our selves: for the proper notion of Humility lies in a low

#### 4 Primitive Christianity. Ch. 1.

Part 2. and mean estimation of our selves, and an answerable carriage towards others, *not thinking of our selves more highly than we ought to think*, nor being unwilling that other men should value us at the same rate. Now that this was the excellent spirit of *Primitive Christianity* will appear, if we consider how earnestly they protested against all *ambitions* and vain-glorious designs, how cheerfully they condescended to the *meanest* Offices and Employments, how studiously they declined all advantages of *applause* and credit, how ready they were rather to *give* praise to others than to *take* it to themselves, *in honour preferring one another*. S. Clemens highly commends his *Corinthians*, that all of them were of an humble temper, in nothing given to vain-glory, *subject* unto others rather than *subjecting* others to themselves, ready to *give* rather than *receive*. Accordingly, he exhorts them (especially after they were fallen into a little faction and disorder) still to be humble-minded, to lay aside all haughtiness and pride, foolishness and anger; and not to glory in *wisdom*, *strength* or *riches*, but *let him that glories, glory in the Lord*; and to follow the example of our

Epist. ad  
Corinth.  
p. 3.

pag. 17.

pag. 20.

#### Ch. 1. Primitive Christianity. 5

our Lord the *Scepter* of the Majesty of Part 2. God; who came not in the vain-boasting of arrogancy and pride, although able to do whatsoever he pleased, but in great meekness and humility of mind, appearing in the world without any *form* or comeliness, or any beauty that he should be desired, suffering himself to be despised and rejected of men, who esteemed him not, and hid as it were their faces from him; who counted himself a worm and no man, and was accordingly made a reproach of men, and the derision of the people; all they that saw him, laughing him to scorn, shooting out the lip and shaking the head at him. Now if our Lord himself was so humble-minded, what should we be, who are come under the yoke of his grace? This and much more to the same purpose, has that Venerable and *Apostolical* man in that admirable Epistle, wherein he does lively describe and recommend the meek and excellent spirit of the Gospel.

*Justin* the *Martyr* treads in the very same steps; He tells us that we are to shun all *sinister* suspicions of others, and to be very careful what *Opinion* we entertain of them: that we are to be of a meek and unpassionate mind, not *envy-*

Epist. ad  
Zent. & Se-  
ren p. 505.

Part 2. ing the good esteem and respect which others have, nor ambitiously affecting, or putting our selves forwards upon any service or imployment: that we are humbly to submit our selves, not in words only, but in all our actions, so as that we may appear to be not *Impostors* and *Dissemblers*, but mild and undersigning persons; for whoever would govern his life aright must be modest and *unpragmatical*, not angry and contentious, but silently consider with himself what is best and fittest to be done: that we are to account others wise and prudent, and not to think our selves the only discreet and understanding persons: that we must not despise their admonitions, but hearken to their counsels when ever they are just and true. When some in *St. Cyprian's* time had made a noble and resolute confession of *Christ* in the face of the greatest danger, lest they should be *exalted above measure* in their own thoughts, he bids them remember, according to the discipline of the Gospel, to be humble, and modest and quiet, that they might preserve the honour of their name, and be as glorious in their actions as they had been in their words and confessions of

*Ibid.* p.  
508, 509.

*Epist. 5.*  
*Presb. &*  
*Diacon. p.*  
13.

of Christ: that they should imitate their Lord, who was not more proud, but more humble at the time of his passion, washing his Apostles feet: and follow the counsel and pattern of *St. Paul*, who in his greatest sufferings continued meek and humble, and did not arrogate any thing to himself, no not after he had been honoured with a translation into *Paradise* and the *third Heavens*. And great reason he had to press this with all possible vehemency at that time, lest Christians by their turbulent and unquiet carriage should provoke the Heathen Magistrate to greater severity against them: and indeed who could better do it than he, who was himself so eminent for humility? For though some *Schismatical* persons (whose wildness and insolence he sought to restrain) endeavoured to insinuate that he was not so humble as became a man of his Rank and Order, and as were our Lord and his Apostles; yet observe how he vindicates himself in a Letter to *Pupius* the Head of the Party; As for my humility (*says he*) 'tis sufficiently known not only to the Brethren, but the *Gentiles* themselves do see and respect it, and thou thy self didst know

*Epist. 69.*  
*p. 116.*

# F 8 Primitive Christianity. Ch. 1.

Part 2. and honour it, whilst thou wast yet in the Church, and didst Communicate with me : but which of us I pray is farthest from humility ? *I*, who daily serve the Brethren, and receive those who come unto the Church with all joy and kindness ; or *Thou*, who makest thyself a *Bishop* over thy *Bishop* ; and pretendest to be a Judge appointed by God over him who is thy Judge ? And indeed how far the good man was from any designs of greatness and domination appear'd in this, that when the people had universally chosen him to be *Bishop*, he privately withdrew and retir'd himself, reckoning himself unworthy of so great and honourable an Office, and giving way to others, whose age and experience rendred them (as he thought) much fitter for it : but the importunity of the people being heightened into a greater impatience, and having found where he was, they beset the house, and blocked up all passages of escape, till they had found him, and forc'd it upon him. And with no less humility did he behave himself in the discharge of it : When consulted by some of his *Clergy* what they should do in the case of the *lapsed*, he answers, that

*Pontius  
Diac. in  
vit. Cypri-  
an. p. 12.*

*Ep. 5. p.  
13, 14.*

# Ch. 1. Primitive Christianity. 9

that being now alone he could say no- Part 2.  
thing to it, for that he had determin'd from his first entring upon his Bishoprick not to adjudge any thing by his own *private* order without the counsel of the *Clergy*, and the consent of the *People*. So meanly did that wise and excellent man think of himself, and so much did he attribute to the judgement and concurrence of those that were below him.

*Nazianzen* reports of his Father (a *Orat. 19.*  
*Bishop* too) that amongst other Vertues *in Laud.*  
he was peculiarly remarkable for *Hu- Patr. p.*  
*mility*; which he did not express *Philos-*  
*sopher-like* in little arts of external *300.*  
*modes* and carriage, putting on a feign'd behaviour, like women who having no *natural* beauty of their own, fly to the *additional*s of dresses and paintings, *δι' ἐκζητησθέντων ἀσχημονας*, becoming more deformed by their ascetic beauty. His Humility consisted not in his *dress*, but in the *constancy* of his mind ; not in the *hanging down* of his head, or the *softness* of his tone, or the *demureness* of his look, or the *gravity* of his beard, or the shaving of his head [the *cropping of his hair*] or the manner of his gate ; but in the frame and temper of his soul, being

Part 2 being as *humble* in his mind, as he was *sublime* and excellent in his life; and when no man could arrive at the perfection of his Vertues, yet every one was admitted to a freedom of converse with him. Both in his garb and diet he equally avoided *pomp* and *fastidius*; and though a great restrainer of his appetite, would yet seem not to do it, lest he should be thought plainly to design glory to himself by being *needlessly* singular above other men. How industriously do we find them many times disowning that deserved praise and commendation that was due to them? How modestly does *Justin Martyr* decline his adversaries commendation of the acuteness and elegance of his reasonings? resolving all into the *Grace of God*, that enabled him to understand and expound the *Scriptures*, of which Grace he there persuades all men freely and fully to become partakers with him. Of the *Confessors* in the time of the persecution under *M. Aurelius*, *Eusebius* out of the relation which the Churches of *Vienna* and *Lyons* in *France* sent to the Churches in *Asia*, tells us, that although they had often born witness to the Truth at the

Dialog.  
cum Tryph.  
p. 280.

Hist. Eccl.  
lib. 5. c. 2.  
p. 166.

the dearest rate of any thing on this side death, though they had been frequently thrown to wild *Beasts*, exposed to the *fire*, and the remains of wounds and violence were visible in all parts of their bodies; yet in imitation of the great humility of the Son of God, they would not after all this (which yet was not uncommon in those times) either call themselves *Martyrs*, or suffer others to call them so; but if any of the brethren either by letter or discourse had saluted them by that title, they would severely reprove and check them for it; acknowledging themselves at best but vile and despicable *Confessors*, and with tears begging of the Brethren to be instant with God by Prayer, that they might perfect all by a *real* Martyrdom. Hence it was, that when *Julian* the *Apostate* refused to proceed against the Christians by open persecution, as his Predecessors had done, because he envied them the honour of being *Martyrs*; *Nazianzen* answers, that he was greatly mistaken if he supposed they suffered all this, rather out of a desire of *Glory*, than a love of *Truth*: such a foolish and vain-glorious humour might indeed be found amongst his

Philo-

Orat. 3. in  
Julian. 1.  
p. 73.



**Part 2.** *Philosophers*, and the best of his party, many of whom have put themselves upon strange attempts merely to gain the honour of a name, and the reputation of *Divinity*: But for Christians, they had rather *dye* in the Cause of Religion, although no man should ever know of it, than to *live* and flourish amongst others with the greatest Honour and Esteem; it being our great solicitude not to please *Men*, but only to obtain honour from *God*: Nay, some of us (*says he*) arrive to that *boroick* pitch, as to desire an intimate *Union* unto God, merely for himself, and not for the honours and rewards that are laid up for us in the other world. Memorable the humility of the great *Constantine*, that when all mens mouths were filled with the honourable mention of his Vertues, and one took upon him to praise him to his face, telling him how happy he was whom God had thought worthy of so great an *Empire* in this world, and for whom he reserv'd a much better *Kingdom* in the next; he was highly offended with the address, and advis'd the man that he should not presume to talk so any more; but rather turn his *praises* of him, into *prayers* to

De Witt. Con-  
stant. lib. 4.  
cap. 48. p.  
331.

to God for him, that both here and hereafter he might be thought worthy to be numbred amongst the servants of God.

I cannot but take notice of what St. *Ad Salvi-*  
*Hierome* reports of *Nébridius*, a young *nam Né-*  
*Roman Gentleman*, Cousin-german to *bridii vi-*  
the *Empress*, by whom he was brought *duam, de*  
up in the Palace, Play-fellow and Com- *viduit. ser-*  
panion to the young *Emperours* (to *vand. p. 75.*  
whom he was very dear) train'd up *tom. 1.*  
with them in the same Studies, and Arts of Education; that notwithstanding all this, and that he was then in the prime and vigour of his Youth, yet he was neither *debauched* by intemperance amidst the delicacies and pleasures of the Court, nor *swell'd* with pride, reflecting upon others with a surly look; but rendred himself amiable unto all: the Princes he lov'd as brethren, and rever'd as Lords: their attendants and Ministers, and all the Orders of the Palace he had so endear'd by kindness and condescension, that they who were so much *below* him, did in a manner think themselves *equal* to him.

I shall give but one instance more of the Humility of those times, and that is their ready condescending to any *office*

Part 2. *see* or Employment, though never so mean, about the poorest Christian: they thought it not below them to *cook* and provide victuals for them, to *visit* the imprison'd, to *kiss* their chains, to *dress* their wounds, to *wash* their feet. And in this our Lord himself went before them, when a little before his death he rose from table, girt himself, *wash'd and wip'd his Disciples feet*, and then told them what influence this ought to have upon them, *That if their Lord and Master had wash'd their feet, they ought also to wash one anothers feet, for that he had given them an example, that they should do as he had done to them*; and good reason, the servant not being greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him. Accordingly we find this particular Act of Christian condescension frequently us'd in the Primitive Church, St. Paul expressly requires it as a qualification in a widow that was to be taken in as a Deaconess into the Church, that she be *one that has us'd to lodge strangers, and to wash the Saints feet*. Tertullian assures us 'twas usually done by Christians in his time, to go into the Prisons to *kiss* and embrace

1 Tim. 5. 10.

Ad Uxor.  
l. 2. c. 4. p.  
168.

embrace the Martyrs chains, to *harbour* Part 2.  
and provide for indigent brethren, and to bring water to *wash* the Saints feet: No office so low, which they were not content to stoop to.

When Placilla the *Empress* was check'd by some of the *Court* for her mighty condescension in visiting the *Hospitals*, and curing the lame and the sick with her *own hands*, preparing and giving them their provisions, as a thing too much below her State and *Grandeur*: She answered, That to distribute gold became the *Emperour*; but for her part she thought her self oblig'd to do this for *God*, who had advanc'd her to that Honour and Dignity: Often instilling this pious Counsel into her Husband; *It becomes you, Sir, always to remember, what you once were, and what you now are: by which means you will shew your self not to be ingrateful to your great Benefactor, and will govern the Empire committed to you Justly and Lawfully, and to the honour of him that gave it.*

St. Hierom reckoning up the Vertues of Paula, a Lady of the greatest Descent and Nobility in Rome; but devoting her self afterwards to the solitudes of a Religious Life, tells us of her, that for  
humility

Theodoret  
H. Eccl. lib.  
5. c. 18. p.  
161.

Epitaph.  
Paula ad  
Eustoch.  
siliam.  
Tom. 1. p.  
175.

Part 2.

humility (the *prime* and chief Vertue of *Christians*) she carried her self with so much lowliness, that whoever had seen and not known her, could not but have mistaken her for the meanest of the Maids that waited on her. When ever she appeared in the midst of those devout and pious Virgins that dwelt with her, she always seem'd both in *cloaths*, and *voice*, and *garb*, and *gate* the least and most contemptible of all the rest. So studious was the Piety of those dayes to keep the lustre of their own perfections from sparkling in their eyes, and not fondly to admire the *glimmerings* of their own light; being so far from falsely arrogating to themselves those excellencies which they had not, that they industriously conceal'd those excellent perfections which they had.

De Beati-  
tudinib.  
Orat. 1.  
Tom. 1. p.  
768.

I cannot better conclude this Chapter, than with the excellent reasonings of St. Gregory of Nyssa against *priding* a mans self in any external ornaments or advantages, where he thus entertains the proud man: He that looks to *himself*, and not to the things that are *about* him, will see little reason to be *proud*: for what is *Man*? Say the best of him, and that which may add the greatest honour

Part 2.

honour and veneration to him, that he's *born* of Nobles, and yet he that adorns his descent, and speaks highest of the splendour and nobility of his house, does but derive his pedigree from the *dirt*: and to enquire more narrowly into the *manner* of his being born into the world, common with other men, were to *uncover* what shame and modesty require should be conceal'd in the profoundest silence. And dost thou not *blush*, thou *statue* of *earth*, who art shortly to be crumbled into *dust*, who *bubble-like* containest within thee a short-liv'd humour; dost thou not *blush* to swell with pride and arrogance, and to have thy mind stuffed with vain idle thoughts? Hast thou no regard to the *double* term of mans life, *how* it *begun*, and *where* it will *end*? Thou pridest thy self in thy *juvenile* age, and flatterest thy self in the flower, the beauty and sprightliness of thy youth, that thy *hands* are ready for *action*, and thy *feet* apt to dance nimble *measures*; that thy locks are *wav'd* by the wanton motions of the wind, and a soft down overgrows thy cheeks, that thy purple-robcs put the very *roses* to the blush, and thy silken vestures

B

are

Part 2. are *variegated* with rich embroidery of of *battels*, *huntings*, or pieces of ancient *history*; or brought down to the feet, artificially set off with black, and curiously made fast with *strings* and *buttons*. These are the things thou look'st at, without any regard to *thy self*. But let me a little as in a *glass* shew thee thy own face, *who* and *what* thou art: Hast thou not seen in a publick *Charnel-house* the unvailed mysteries of humane nature; *bones* rudely thrown upon heaps; naked *skulls* with hollow *eye-holes*, yielding a dreadful and deformed spectacle? Hast thou not beheld their *grinning* mouths, and *gastly* looks, and the rest of their members carelessly dispersed and scattered? If thou hast beheld such sights as these, in *them* thou hast seen *thy self*. Where then will be the signes of thy present beauty, that good *complexion* that adorns thy cheeks, and the colour of thy lips, that frightful *Majesty*, and supercilious loftiness that once resided in thine eyes, or thy nose that once beautifully grac'd thy cheeks? Where are thy locks that were wont to reach thy shoulders, the curls that used to adorn thy temples? What are become of

of those arms that used to draw the Part 2. *bow*, those leggs that used to bestride thy *horses*? Where's the *purple*, the *silken garments*, the *long robe*, the *belt*, the *spurs*, the *horse*, the *race*, the *noise* and *pransings*; and all the rest of those things that now add fuel to thy pride? Tell me, where then will those things be, upon the account whereof thou dost now so much *boast* and *bear up* thy self? Was there ever any *dream* so fond and inconstant, any thing more *phantastick* that ever appeared to a man asleep? What *shadow* was ever so thin, so incapable of being grasp'd within the hollow of the hand, as this dream of youth, which at once *appears*, and immediately *vanishes* away. Thus the Holy Man treats the young *vapouring* gallant, and levels his pride with the sober considerations of mortality: In his following discourse he deals with persons of *riper* years, and such as are in places of *authority* and power, and shews how absurd and uncomely pride is in them: which it might not be impertinent to represent, but fearing to be tedious, I forbear.

CHAP. II.

Of their Heavenly-mindedness,  
and contempt of the World.

*The Soul rightly constituted naturally tends upwards, especially when assisted with the aids of Religion. The first Christians much above the World. Not wrought upon by temptations of advantage. They accounted it the greatest honour to be Christians. Contented with a very mean portion of outward things. The Story of some of our Saviours Kindred brought before Domitian. The Sect of the Apostolici and Apotactici, the Fathers of the Mendicant Orders in the Church of Rome. The little care which Christians then had of rich furniture and costly provisions. Their denying to go to publick feasts and sports made for the pleasure of the people. This charged upon them by the Heathens. The case of the woman that was seiz'd upon by an evil spirit while she was at the Theatre. Their chearful parting with any worldly comforts, Estate, Relations, &c.*

*A strange*

*A strange Heroick speech of Melania at the loss of her Husband and two Sons, mentioned by St. Hierom. Eager for Martyrdom, as what would presently send them to Heaven. Their frequent supporting themselves under sufferings with discourses of the Kingdom above. Thence accus'd as treasonable affectors of the Empire. Their contempt of the world much promoted by the opinion that the day of judgement was near at hand. Christians in the world like sojourners in a strange Country.*

**T**He Soul of man being Heaven-born cannot but partake of the nature and disposition of that Country, and have a Native inclination to that place from whence it borrows its *Original*: And though 'tis true, in this corrupt and degenerate state it is deeply sunk into *matter*, clogg'd and overborn with the earthly and sensual propensions of the lower appetites, the desires and designs of men creeping up and down like *shadows* upon the surface of the earth; yet does it often, especially when assisted with the aids of Religion, attempt its own rescue and release. The mind of a good man is

Part 2, acted by manly and *generous* impulses, it dwells in the Contemplations of the *upper Region*, tramples upon those little projects of profit or pleasure which *ensnare* and *enslave* other men, and makes all its designs subservient to the interests of a better Country. A temper of mind never more triumphant in any than in the *Christians* of old, whose *Conversations were in Heaven*, and whose spirits breath'd in too free an air to be caught with the charms of the best enjoyments this world could afford: They looked upon the delights and advantages of this life as things not worthy to arrest their affections in their journey to a better. *Justin Martyr* discoursing with *Trypho* the Jew, tells him, that they were careful with all fear to converse with men according to the *Scriptures*, not greedily desiring to gain *Riches*, or *Glory*, or *Pleasure* to themselves, concerning any of which no man could lay any thing to their charge; and that they did not live like the great men of *his people*, of whom God himself has left this reproachful character, That their *Princes were companions of thieves, every one loving gifts, and following after rewards.*

*Dial. cum  
Tryph. p.  
308.*

Nay,

Nay, *Trypho* himself bears them this Part 2. testimony, though doubtless he intended it as a reproach to them, that having *Ibid. p. 226.* from a vain report chosen *Christ* to be their *Master*, they did for his sake foolishly undervalue and throw away all the enjoyments and advantages of this world. Amongst us (*says Tatian*) there is no affectation of *vain-glory*, no *diversity* of sentiments and opinions, *Orat. cont. Gra. p. 167.* but separating our selves from all vulgar and earthly thoughts and discourses, and having given up our selves to the commands of God to be govern'd by his Law, we abandon whatever seems but a-kin to humane glory. They never met with opportunities to have advantaged and enriched themselves, but they declined and turned them off with a noble scorn. When *Abgarus* the *Toparch* of *Edeffa* offered *Thaddæus* (one of the Seventy Disciples) great sums of Gold and Silver for the pains he had taken, and the great things he had done amongst them, he refused them with this answer, *To what purpose should we receive good things from others, who have freely forsaken and renounced our own?* As indeed in those times friends and relations, houses and lands were

*Euseb. Hist.  
Eccl. lib. i.  
c. 15. p. 35.*

B 4

chear-

Part 2. cheerfully parted with, when they stood in competition with Christ; they could content themselves with the most naked poverty, so it might but consist with the profession of the Gospel.

*Martyr. e-*  
*jus apud*  
*Sur. ad*  
*diems, Feb.*  
*tom. 1. ex*  
*5. Metaph.* When *Quintianus* the President under *Decius* the Emperour asked *Agatha* the Virgin-Martyr, why being descended of such Rich and *Illustrious* Parents, she would stoop to such low and mean Offices as she took upon her; She presently answered him, *Our Glory and Nobility lies in this, that we are the Servants of Christ.* To the same purpose was the answer of *Quintinus* the Martyr under the *Dioclesian* Persecution, when the President asked him how it came about, that he being a *Roman* Citizen, and the Son of a *Senator* would truckle under such a *Superstition*, and worship him for a *God*, whom the *Jews* had *Crucified*; the Martyr told him, That it was the highest Honour and Nobility to know and serve God: that the Christian Religion, which he call'd *Superstition*, ought not to be traduc'd with so *base* a name, seeing it immediately guided its followers to the highest degrees of happiness; for here-  
in

*Apud Sur.*  
*ad 3. Offo.*  
*com. 5.*

Part 2. in it is that the Omnipotent God is revealed, the great Creator of Heaven and Earth, and his Son *Jesus Christ* our Lord, by whom all things were made, and who is in all things equal to his Father.

The simplicity of Christians then kept them from aspiring after honour and greatness, and if at any time advanced to it, their great care was to keep themselves unspotted from the world; as *Nazianzen* reports of his brother *Cæsarius*, chief Physician to the Emperour *Constantinus*, that though he was very dear to him (as he was to the whole Court) and advanced by him every day to greater honours and dignities, yet *this (says he) was the chief of all*, that he suffered not the Nobility of his soul to be corrupted by that Glory, and those delights that were round about him: but accounted this his chiefest honour that he was a *Christian*; in comparison of which all things else were to him but as a sport and Pageantry; he looked upon other things but as *Comick Scenes*, soon up and as soon over; but upon *Piety* as the most safe and permanent good, and which we can properly call our own, regarding that

*In Laud.*  
*Cæsar. frat.*  
*Orat. 10.*  
*p. 166.*

Part 2. that Piety especially which is most inward and unseen to the world.

*In laud.  
Gorg. n.  
Orat. 11.  
p. 183.*

The like he relates of his Sister *Gorgonia*; as the perfection of her excellent temper, that she did not more *seem* to be good, than she did really strive to be so; peculiarly conversant in those secret acts of piety, which are visible only to him, who sees what is *hidden and secret*; to the Prince of this world she left nothing, transferring all into those safe and celestial treasures that are above; she left nothing to the earth but her body, changing all things for the hopes of a better life; bequeathing no other *riches* to her children but an excellent *pattern*, and a desire to follow her example. The truth is, as to estate, they were not concern'd for more than what would supply the *necessities* of nature, or the *wants* of others, not solicitous to get or possess such revenues as might make them the objects either of mens *envy* or their *fear*; as may appear amongst others by this instance.

*Euseb. lib. 6.  
3. c. 20.  
p. 89.* Domitian the Emperour being inform'd that there were yet remaining some of Christs Kindred according to the flesh (the Nephews of Judas the Brother

Brother of our Lord, of the Race and Part 2. Posterity of *David*, which the Emperour sought utterly to extirpate) he sent for them, enquired of them whether they were of the *Line of David*, they answered they were; he ask'd what possessions and *estate* they had, they told him they had between them *thirty nine acres of land* (to the value of about *nine thousand pence*) out of the fruits whereof they both paid him *Tribute*, and *maintained* themselves with their own hard labour, whereto the *hardness* and *callousness* of their hands (which they then shew'd him) bore witness: He then ask'd them concerning *Christ* and the state of his *Kingdom*; to which they answered, that his *Empire was not of this world*, but Heavenly and Angelical, and which should finally take place in the end of the world, when he should come *with glory* to judge both the quick and the dead, and to reward men according to their works: which when he heard, despising the men upon the account of their meanness, he let them go without any severity against them. Of *Origen* *Id. lib. 6.* we read, that he was so great a despiser <sup>c. 3. p. 205.</sup> of the world, that when he might have liv'd



Part 2. liv'd upon the maintenance of others, he would not, but parted with his *Library* of Books to one that was to allow him only *four oboli* a day; the day he spent in laborious tasks and exercises, and the greatest part of the night in study; he always remembered that precept of our Saviour, *Not to have two coats, not to wear shoes, not anxiously to take care for to morrow*, nor would he accept the kindness of others, when they would freely have given him some part of their estate to live on.

Not that the Christians of those times thought it *unlawful* to possess estates, or to use the blessings of Divine Providence; for though in those times of persecution they were often forc'd to quit their estates and habitations, yet did they preserve their *Proprieties* intire, and industriously mind the *necessary* conveniences of this life, so far as was *consistent* with their care of a better. There were indeed a sort of Christians call'd *Apostolici*, who in a fond imitation of the *Apostles* left all they had, and gave up themselves to a voluntary poverty, holding it not lawful to possess any thing: hence they were also call'd *Apotactici*, or *renouncers*, because

because they quitted and renounc'd Part 2. whatsoever they had; but they were ever accounted infamous *Hereticks*: They were, as *Epiphanius* tells us, the descendants of *Tatian*, part of the old *Cathari* and *Encratite*: together with whom they are put in a Law of the Emperour *Theodosius*, and reckon'd amongst the vilest of the Manichæan *Hereticks*: mentioned also by *Julian* the *Apostate* as a branch of the *Galileans*, as he calls the Christians; by him compar'd to the *Cynic Philosophers* amongst the Heathens, for the neglecting of their Countrey, the abandoning of their estates and goods, and their loose and rambling course of life; only herein different, that they did not as those *Galilean Apotactiste* run up and down under a pretence of poverty to beg alms. The truth is, by the account which both he and *Epiphanius* give of them, they seem to have been the very *Patriarchs* and primitive founders of those *Mendicant Orders*, and professors of *vowed* poverty which swarm so much in the Church of *Rome* at this day. But to return; The Christians of those dayes did not study those Arts of *splendor* and *gallantry* which

*Cnos. Apostolic. Hæref. 61. pag. 220.*

*Cod. Theod. lib. 16.*

*Tit. 5. de Hæreticis.*

*De Cynic. Sect. Orat.*

*7. p. 417.*

Part 2. which have since over-run the world, stately Palaces, costly furniture, rich hangings, fine tables, curious beds, vessels of Gold and Silver, the very possession of which (as *Clemens Alexandrinus* speaks) creates envy; they are rare to get, hard to keep, and it may be not so accommodate to use. Will not a knife cut as well (*says he*) though it have not an *Ivory-haft*, or be not garnished with *silver*? or an *earthen* basin serve to wash the hands? will not the *table* hold our provisions, unless its feet be made of *Ivory*? or the Lamp give its *light* though made by a *Potter*, as well as if 'twere the work of the *Goldsmith*? may not a man sleep as well upon a *mean* couch, as upon a bed of *Ivory*? upon a *Goats skin*, as well as upon a *purple* or *Phœnician* carpet? Our Lord ate his meat out of a *common* dish, & made his followers sit upon the *grass*, and washed his Disciples feet, without ever fetching down a *silver* bowl from Heaven; he took the water which the *Samaritaness* had drawn in an *earthen* pitcher, not requiring one of gold, shewing how easie it was to quench his thirst; for he respected the *use*, not the vain and superfluous state of things.

This

*Pedag. lib.*  
2. c. 3. p.  
160, 161.

This and much more he there urges to Part 2. this excellent purpose, to let us see how little a Christian need be beholden to the world, if he be content with what's enough for the necessary uses of humane life.

To this let me annex some part of that discourse which *Gregory Nyssen* has upon this subject: The fluid and transitory condition of mans life (*says he*) calls for a daily reparation of the decays of nature: he therefore that looks no further than to minister to the desires of nature, and troubles not himself with vain anxious thoughts for more than's necessary, lives little less than the life of *Angels*, whilst by a mind content with little he imitates their want of nothing. For this cause we are commanded to seek only what's enough to keep the body in its due state and temper, and thus to address our Prayers to God, give us our daily bread: Give us bread, not delicacies or riches, not splendid and purple vestures, or rich golden ornaments, not Pearls and Jewels, silver vessels, large fields and great possessions, not the government of Armies, the conduct of Wars, and disposal of Nations, not numerous

*De Orat.*  
*Domin.*  
*Orat. 5. p.*  
*749. tom. 1.*  
*Vid. Cypr.*  
*de Orat.*  
*Domin. p.*  
192.

Part 2. merous *flocks* and herds of cattle, or multitudes of *slaves* and servants, not *splendor* and *gallantry* in publick, not *marble pillars*, or *brazen statues*, or *filken Carpets*, or *quires of Musick*, or any of those things by which the soul is diverted and drawn from more *Noble* and *Divine* thoughts and cares: But only *Bread*, which indeed is the true and common staff of mans life.

Minut. F.  
p. 10. vid.  
Constit.  
Apostol. lib.  
2. c. 62.  
p. 886.

Nor were they more studious of *pleasures* and recreations *abroad*, than they were of fineness and bravery *at home*: They went not to publick *feasts*, nor frequented the *shews* that were made for the disport and entertainment of the people: and this was so notorious, that the Heathens charg'd it upon them as part of their *Crime*. Observe how he in *Minutius Felix* draws it up; The *Romans* (*says he*) govern and enjoy the world, while *you* in the mean time are careful and *mopish*, abstaining even from *lawful pleasures*; you visit not the *shews*, nor are present at the *pomps*, nor frequent the *publick feasts*; you abhor the holy *games*, the *sacrificial meats and drinks*, *crown* not your heads with *Garlands*, nor *perfume* your bodies with *sweet odours*; a ghastly, fearful

fearful and miserable people! which by Part 2. that time that *Octavius* the Christian comes to answer, he grants it all to be *Part 2. 301* true, and tells him there was very good reason why they should abstain from their shews, pomps and diversilements, at which they could not be present without great sin and shame, without affronting their modesty, and offering a distast and horreur to their minds; and indeed they reckon'd themselves particularly oblig'd to this by what they had vow'd and undertaken at their baptism, when they solemnly engaged to *renounce the Devil and all his works, pomps and pleasures, i. e.* (*says St. Cyril*) the lights and sports of the *Theatre*, and such like *vanities*. The truth *Catech. Mss. 1. p. 510.* is, they look'd upon the publick sports and pastimes of those dayes as the *Scenes* not only of *folly* and *lewdness*, but of great *impiety* and *Idolatry*; as places where the *Devil* eminently rul'd, and reckon'd all his *Votaries* that came thither. Accordingly *Tertullian* tells *De Spect. c. 26. p. 824* us of a *Christian woman* who going to the *Theatre*, was there *possessed* by the *Devil*; and when the Evil Spirit at his casting out was ask'd, how he durst set upon a *Christian*; he presently answer'd,

Part 2, ed, *I did but what was fit and just, for I found her upon my own ground.*

Being thus affected towards the world, they could very willingly part with any thing that was dearest to them, *Friends, Estate, Liberty, or Life* it self. We are not mov'd (*says one of their Apologists*) with the loss of our *Estates* which our enemies wrest from us, nor with the *violence* that's offer'd to our *credit* and reputation, or if there be any thing of greater concernment than these; for although these things are mightily priz'd and valued amongst men, yet can we despise and sleight them: nay, we cannot only when *beaten*, refrain from *striking* again, and make no *resistance* against those that invade and spoil us; but to them that *smite one cheek*, we can turn the other, and to them that take away the coat, we can let them take the cloak also. And I remember *Nazianzen* tells us, that of those excellencies and endowments which God had given him, *health, wealth, esteem, and eloquence*, he reaped this only benefit, that he had something which he could *contemn*, and by which he could shew that he infinitely valued *Christ* before them. The great est

Athen. leg.  
pro Christ.  
p. 2.

Orat. 1. p.  
32.

est endearment of this life is *Relations*, Part 2. and yet these too they could quietly resign when God called for them: Memorable it is what St. *Hierom* reports of *Melania* (a Lady of great Piety in his time, in whose commendation *Paulinus* Bishop of *Nola* spends a very large Epistle, especially commending her for her *generous* and heroick mind, *tam viriliter Christiana*, that she was something above a woman, and had the *Masculine* spirit of a Christian: of this Lady St. *Hierom* tells us) that her *Husband* lying dead by her, she lost *two* of her *sons* at the same time; and when every one expected that she should break out into a violent passion, tear her hair, rent her garments, and burst into tears; she stood still, and at last falling down as 'twere at the feet of *Christ*, broke out into this pious and Christian resentment, *Lord, I shall serve thee more nimbly and readily, by being eased of the weight thou hast taken from me.* Nay, so little kindness had they for this world, that they cared not how little they stayed in it, and therefore readily offered themselves to *Martyrdom* at every turn. *Tertullian* tells his adversaries, that all those plagues

Ad Paul.  
tom. 1. p.  
160.

Epist. lib. 2.  
Epist. 2.

Apol. c. 41.  
p. 33.

C 2 which

Part 2. which God sent upon the world, what damage soever they might do their enemies, could not hurt them, because they had no other concernment in this world, than *as soon* as they could to *get out* of it. This he elsewhere tells us, the very *Gentiles* assign'd as one reason, why the Christians were train'd up in a defiance of all the sports and pleasures of this life, that they might be more willing to dye; and that the cords being cut by which they were tedder'd to this world, they might be more nimble and expedite for their passage hence. Their main designs were intent upon the happiness of another world, and therefore they regarded not what they went thorough to come sooner to it. Being inflamed (says *Justin Martyr*) with the desire of a pure and an *eternal* life, we breath after an *intimate* converse with God the great Parent and Creator of the world, and make hast to *seal* our confession with our *blood*; being certainly perswaded that they shall attain to this state, who by their actions study to approve themselves to God that they follow after him, and are heartily desirous of communion with him in that life, where  
no

*De Spect.*  
c. 1. p. 73.

*Apol. 2. p.*  
57.

no malice or wickedness shall take Part 2.  
place. This was the mighty support they lean'd upon, the great cordial with which they kept up their spirits in those sad times of suffering and persecution, the firm *belief* and expectation which they had of enjoying God in a better life. They knew, that the more hast their enemies made to *break open the cage* of their bodies, the sooner their souls would be at liberty to *fly* to the regions of blessedness and immortality. And indeed so much were their thoughts fixed upon this, so oft did they use to comfort one another by discouraging of that *Kingdom* which they expected hereafter, that some of their enemies over-hearing and mistaking them, accused them as *treasonable affectors* of the *Empire*: when alas! (as *Justin Martyr* assures the *Emperours*) they *Ibid. p. 58.*  
meant nothing less; which they might know by this, that being brought to tryal, they freely confessed themselves to be Christians, though they certainly knew they must *dye* for it: whereas (*says he*) did we expect an *humane Kingdome*, we would dissemble and deny it, to avoid death, and so expect a more *convenient* season to accomplish

Part 2. our designs; but since our hopes are not placed in any thing in this world, we regard not those that take away our lives, well knowing they take nothing from us, but what we must needs lay down ourselves. It was their care then continually to *keep company* with *dying* thoughts, and to dwell within the prospect of eternity; it being generally true of all what St. Hierom particularly reports of *Marcella*, that she *lived* so, as alwayes believing that she should immediately *dye*, and never put on her *garments*, but it put her in mind of her *grave*, and of the *sheet* that should wrap her up in the *house of silence*.

Epitaph.  
Marcell.  
ad Princip.  
p. 119.

But besides the influence which the expectation of their particular *dissolutions* had upon them, there was one thing which I doubt not did mightily contribute to their being *wean'd* from the world, and did strongly animate them to a quick and speedy diligence about the affairs of the other life, and that was, the *Opinion* they generally had of the *day of judgment being near at hand*: An *Opinion* started early, as appears by that caution which St. Paul gives the *Thessalonians* about it; and it

2 Thes. 2.  
3: 4.

lasted

lasted for some Ages after, as is evident from several passages in *Tertullian*, who always improves it to this purpose, that men should not unnecessarily *encounter* themselves with the affairs of this life, but carry themselves as those that were immediately passing hence. I conclude with that of *Justin Martyr*; Christians (*says he*) *dwell* in their own countries, but as *inmates* and *forreigners*; they have all things *common* with other men as *fellow-Citizens*, and yet suffer all things as *strangers* and *forreigners*: every *forreign Region* is their *Country*, and every *Country* is *forreign* to them: They *marry* like other men, and beget children, but do not *expose* or neglect their Off-spring; they *feast* incommon, but do not *exceed* like other men; they *are in the flesh*, but do not *live after the flesh*; dwell upon *earth*, but their *conversation is in Heaven*. Therefore he compares Christians in this world to the *soul* in the *body*, as for other reasons, so especially for this, that as the soul lives *in* the body, but is not *of* the body, so Christians dwell *in* the world, but are not *of* the world; an *immortal spirit* dwells in a *mortal tabernacle*, and Christians,

Part. 2.  
Vid. de cult.  
fæmin. lib.  
2. c. 9. ad  
uxor. lib.  
1. c. 5.

Epist. ad  
Diognet.  
p. 497.

C 4

while

Part 2. while they sojourn in these corruptible mansions, expect and look for an incorruptible state in Heaven.

### CHAP. III.

Of their sobriety, in respect of their Garb and Apparel.

*Much of the temper of the mind shewn in the outward garb. The great ends of clothes, for honesty, necessity, distinction. The Primitive Christians accommodated themselves to these. Carefull to avoid both singularity and excess. Generally conformable to the sober fashions of the places where they liv'd. Whether when they turn'd Christian they left off the Roman gown, and took up the Pallium or Cloak; à Toga ad Pallium: the occasion of Tertullians writings his excellent Book on that subject. The Pallium principally worn by those that entred upon a life of more than ordinary strictness. Their great care to keep a medium between costliness and sordidness. This accounted part of that pomp and vanity which they*

*they renounc'd in baptism. The vanity of excessive garbs and finery complain'd of by the Fathers in some of those times. Especially invective against methods of artificial beauty; what pleaded in defence of it by some persons in those dayes, considered and answered out of the Fathers. That they were rich, no sufficient argument to patronize the doing of it. Better ways of imploying their estates. Nor that they could do it without violating their chastity. The inconveniencies of it with respect to others. That they did it to please their Husbands, Answered: This needles; every wise and good man content without it. Such Arts savour'd too much of lewd wanton Prostitutes. Painting, and such Arts injurious to God, and disparagement of his workmanship. This largely prosecuted out of Tertullian and Cyprian. A memorable story which Theodoret relates of his own Mother. True beauty accounted to lye in a holy and vertuous mind, and a pure and pious life. Gay and phantastick persons fitly represented by the Egyptian temples. Nazianzen's description of his good Sister Gorgonia.*

The

**T**HE Primitive Christians being thus eminent for their contempt of the world, 'tis easy to imagine that they were very *temperate* and *abstemious* in the use of all the pleasures and conveniences of humane life; which we shall more particularly consider in these three instances, their *Sobriety* in respect of *Garb* and *Apparel*, their *Temperance* in regard of *food* and *diet*, and their *Continence* or *chastity*.

For the first, the *care* about our *Garb* and *Dress*, it is one of those instances of *Sobriety* which are to be conducted by the rules of Religion and Reason, and which very much discover a virtuous or a vicious temper: *There are three things* (as the *Son of Syrach* well observes) *that shew a man what he is, his Attire, excessive Laughter, and his Gate*: There is not certainly a more open evidence of a *vain mind*, than a *vain garb* and *habit*. *St. Basil* discoursing what habit does best become a *Christian*, tells us in general, that it ought to be such as most lively expresses the meekness and humility of the mind, that good men of old were so attired, and that we are commanded, *having food and raiment*

Reg. fus.  
disput. in-  
terrog. 22.  
p. 566.  
tom. 2.

*ment to be therewith content*; not studying *variety*, and which most commonly follows it, *softness* and *elegancy*, which are but instruments to minister to excess and luxury, introduced into humane life through the idle and unnecessary Arts of looseness and effeminacy. 'Tis not enough (says *Tertulian*) that a Christian be *chast* and modest, but he must appear to be so; a virtue, of which he should have so great a store and treasure, that it should flow from his *mind* upon his *habit*, and break from the retirements of his *conscience* into the superficies of his *life*, as he there expresses it. More particularly *St. Basil* tells us, that the habit of a Christian ought to be suitable to the two great ends of cloathing instituted by God, viz. *Honesty* and *Necessity*; *honesty* to hide the less comely parts of the body, and to cover that shame which sin has brought upon mankind: in *Paradise Innocency* was mans only robe, 'twas sin brought in the *fig-leav'd* coat, and what should more induce us to be modest in our apparel, than to remember, that our clothes are *Monitors* of our apostasie, and that there's little reason we should *pride* our selves in that

De cultu  
femin. lib.  
2. c. 13.  
p. 160.

Ibid. p. 567.



**Part 2.** that which is only a cover for our *shame & Necessity*, and so clothes were designed to keep the body in convenient *warmth*, and to defend it from those injuries and extremities of the air and wether, which would otherwise soon rot down this house of clay. Now to both these ends (he tells us) we ought to accommodate our garments, not striving for variety, having some for uses at home, others for ostentation when we go abroad, but that whatever attains these ends is enough. But besides these, there is a third *Use* and end of clothes, noted by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and that is for *distinction*, not only of *Sexes*, but of different *ranks* and *degrees* of men, such as agree best to mens *age, persons, shape, nature*, or their several *states* and *employments*; in these respects men may use different and distinguishing habits: nay, he grants that in some cases men may recede from the strict rule and discipline of this affair, and that such women as cannot otherwise gain upon their husbands, may (if they require it) go a little more *trim* and neat, provided (as he there limits it) it be done *only* to please and gain upon their husbands, and

*Vid. Cyril.  
ad Illumi-  
nati. Catec.  
6. p. 94.*

*Pedag. lib.  
9. c. 11. p.  
245.*

and that they do not practise any *Artifices of unlawful beauty.* **Part 2.**

Now that the *ancient Christians* govern'd themselves by these rules in this affair is plain, in that they avoided both *singularity* on the one hand, and *excess* on the other, generally conforming themselves to the *decent* and *orderly* customes and fashions of the times and places *where* they liv'd. *Justin Martyr* giving his friend an account of the *Christians*, tells him, that they differ'd not from other men either in their *Country*, or *speech*, or the *usages* of the civil life; they dwell in their own *Cities*, use the same language with other men, nor have they any singular and extraordinary way of life; they are not in any thing affected or phantastick; but inhabiting partly amongst *Greeks*, partly in *barbarous* *Cities*, as every ones lot is fallen, they follow the customes of their *Countrey*; and both in clothes and diet, and all other affairs of outward life, shew the excellent and admirable constitution of their discipline and conversation. I am not ignorant of what some learned men would have us to believe, that in those times when any turn'd from *Paganism* to

*Epist. ad  
Diogn. p.  
496.*

Part 2. to Christianity they were wont to change their habit, to leave off the *Toga* or *Gown* (the common habit almost in all parts of the *Roman Empire*) and to take up the *Pallium* or *Cloak*: and this they think sufficiently countenanc'd by the instance of *Tertullian*, who laying aside the *Gown*, and putting on the *Cloak*, was accused of lightness and inconstancy by the people of *Carthage*, and bitterly persecuted with the common sarcasm, *à Toga ad Pallium*, as one that had wantonly skipp'd from the *Gown* to the *Cloak*, i. e. from one profession to another; insomuch that he was forc'd to write an Apology for himself, which he did in his book *de Pallio*, where with a great deal of satyriacal and sarcastick wit he retorts upon them, and vindicates himself from their charge and cavils. But that there was any such change of habit at persons first coming over to Christianity I can see no reason to believe; and for the case of *Tertullian* it makes nothing to the purpose, unless it could be prov'd that he left off the *gown* at his first entrance upon the *Christian Religion*, which will be hard to make out; for I am clearly of the mind of the learned

*Salmasius*,

*Salmasius*, that he altered his habit, and assumed the *cloak* not when he first became *Christian*, but when he was made *Presbyter* of the Church of *Carthage*; whence it is called by him according to his dialect *Sacerdos habitus* (for so it is in all ancient *Manuscripts*, and in the first *Edition* of B. *Rhenanus*, and not *Sacer habitus*, as later Editions have it) the *Priests habit*; because the *Christian Priests* usually wore it after their entrance upon Holy Orders. For the better understanding of which, we are to consider a little, that amongst the *Greeks* the *Pallium* or *Cloak* was not commonly worn, but was the proper habit of *Philosophers*, who profess'd a more severe and accurate course of life. Accordingly amongst the *Christians* those who professed themselves to be *ascetics*, the more *strict* and exact observers of the *Christian discipline*, whether they were *Laity* or *Clergy*, assumed this habit to themselves; and because the *Clergy* in those times generally took upon them this austere and philosophick way of life, this garb was most peculiar to them; and this probably they did the rather, not only because this was the most plain and simple garment

Part 2.  
Prefat. in  
Comment.  
Tertul. de  
Pallio.  
Tertul. de  
Pall. c. 4.  
Vid. Tertul.  
ex Edit. B.  
Rhenani,  
p. 620. vid.  
etiam  
Salm. in  
loc.

Part 2. ment in it self, but because they supposed the *Apostles* (whom they strove to imitate) wrote this habit, as is plain they did as from other passages in the *New Testament* so from *St. Pauls* sending for the *Cloak* which he left at *Troas*: therefore the Author of the *Apostolical History*, who shelters himself under the name of *Abdias Babylonius*, certainly forgot himself, when describing the habit of *St. Bartholomew* the *Apostle*, he made it so trim and fine. *Vestitus* (says he) *Colore* (doubtless it should be *Colobio*) *albo, &c.* he was clothed in a white coat, beset with studs of purple, over which he had a white Cloak, having purple gems at each corner of it; a piece of gallantry unknown to the plainness of those times, and unsuitable to the profession of that Holy man. Indeed, as plenty and prosperity began to flow in upon the Church, this simple and modest garment was laid aside, and the Clergy took upon them a more rich and splendid garb; insomuch that when *Eustathius* Bishop of *Sebastia* took upon him to wear the *Philosophick* Cloak, and perswaded his followers also to use it; he was for this very reason deposed by his own Father *Eulalius*

Secret.  
Hist. Eccl.  
lib. 2. c. 43.  
p. 146. vid.  
Concil.  
Gangr.  
Can. 12.

Bishop

Bishop of *Cæsarea*, because wearing a Part 2. habit unsuitable to the Ministerial Order, which sentence was not long after ratified by the Synod of *Gangra*, and a Canon made against it.

From what has been said it may appear, that although the Clergy, and such as entred upon a more strict and ascetic course of life had a habit peculiar to themselves, yet the generality of Christians differed not from the common garb. They were indeed exceeding careful to avoid all such as favoured of costliness and finery, choosing such as expressed the greatest lowliness and innocency. The garment that we should wear (says *Clemens* of *Alexan-* Ib. ubi  
supr p. 244 *dria*) ought to be mean and frugal, not curiously wrought with divers colours (the emblem of craftiness and deceit) but white, to denote our embracing and professing simplicity and truth; our outward clothing is an indication of the temper of our manners: that's true simplicity of habit, which takes away what's vain and superfluous; that the best and most solid garment, which is furthest from art and curiosity, and most apt to preserve and keep warm the body. *S. Cyprian* ever observ'd a

Pont. diac.  
in vit. Cypri  
p. 12.

D

due

Part 2. due *decorum* in his garb as well as his countenance; his aspect was grave and yet chearful; neither a frowning severity, nor an over-pleasant merriness, but such a happy mixture of both, that it was hard to say, whether he was more to be fear'd or lov'd, but that he equally deserv'd both: and just such was his garb, sober and moderate, keeping a just distance both from slovenliness and superfluity; it neither argued him to be swell'd with pride, nor infected with a miserable and sordid mind.

Ad Olymp.  
Ep. 2. tom.  
4. p. 617,  
623.

*Chrysostome* amongst other things especially commends *Olympias* (a woman of great birth and estate, and of no less piety) for the incredible modesty and meanness of her attire, not much better than that of the poorest beggar; having nothing in her garb or gate that was feigned or gaudy, nothing elaborate or artificial; which things (*says he*) were the colours, the bright and beautiful representations of her virtue, whereby that wisdom and divine Philosophy that lay hidden in her mind, was externally painted and shadowed out. So far were they then from the vanity and affectation of pomp and bravery, of dazling the eye with rich costly

costly ornaments, that they thought Part 2. they could never seem mean enough, and this they look'd upon themselves as especially bound to by the promise which they had made at *Baptism*, when they renounc'd the Devil, and his whole pomp and service, as the same Father elsewhere informs us.

Homi. 21. ad  
pop. An-  
tioch. notto  
1. p. 244.

It cannot be denied, but that the Fathers frequently complain of, and smartly declaim against the vanity and folly of some in those times (women especially, by the weakness of their sex more propense to the excesses of pride and superfluity) who gave up themselves to all the arts of fineness and gallantry, and out of an emulation to the Ladies amongst the Heathens amongst whom they liv'd, they affected all manner of pomp and elegancy, striving to be as rich and gaudy, not as they ought, but as they could make themselves; whose excessive prodigality *Tertullian* does thus no less elegantly than sarcastically describe; A great estate (*says he*) is drawn out of a little pocket; it's nothing to expend \*many thousand pounds upon one string of pearls, a weak tender neck can make a shift to carry about whole Woods and Lordships; vast sums

De Cult.  
Fem. lib. 1.  
c. 8. p. 153.  
\* In the  
Lat. decies  
sestertium;  
which in  
our money  
is seventy  
eight thou-  
sand one  
hundred  
and twelve  
pound ten  
shillings.

Part 2. of money borrowed of the *Banker*, and noted in his account book to be repay'd every month with interest, are weigh'd at the *beam* of a thin slender *ear*; so great is the strength of pride and ambition, that even the *weak* feeble body of one woman shall be able to carry the *weight* and substance of so many pounds taken up at *Usury*. This was look'd upon as a very great sin.

*Padog. lib.*  
3. c. 2. p.  
219.

*Clemens Alexandrinus* censures it very deep; that though gluttony and intemperance be great vices, yet not to be compar'd with a *nice over-curious* study of fineness and bravery: I suppose he means in respect of its insatiable and unbounded nature. For so he adds; A well-furnish'd table, and cups that go round may quickly stop the mouth of a hungry stomach: but where there is a nice affectation of *bravery*, of *Gold*, *Purple*, or *Jewels*, there not the treasures of the *Creation*, not what's *above*, or *underground*, not the *spoyles* of the *Tyrian Sea*, not the *freights* from *India*, or *Ethiopia*, no nor *Pactolus* with his golden streams would suffice. Nay, such persons though as rich as *Midas*, would not yet think themselves rich or fine enough. But that which the Fa-

: thers

thers do most severely censure and cry out against, is not only the *expence* and costliness of their cloths and jewels, but the *arts* which they used to add *greater* beauty and handsomness to themselves, than God and Nature had bestowed upon them. This it seems the pride and folly of some *Christian* women had arriv'd to, which the zeal and piety of those times did vehemently condemn and protest against. It may not be amiss to consider, what the *Gallants* of those times *pleaded* for themselves, and what was returned in *answer* to them. Sometimes they plead'd that they were *rich*, and had great estates, and ought therefore to live *like themselves*, and to make use of the estates that God had given them. To this *Cyprian* answers, that they only are *truly* rich, that are rich *in* and *towards* God; that the world ought to be *despised*, the *pomps* and *delights* whereof we then *renounc'd*, when we happily turn'd to God, with the *love* of whom *all that is in the world*, the *lust of the flesh*, the *lust of the eye*, and the *pride of life is not consistent*; that the use of riches in this case is to be governed by just and moderate measures: the Apo-

*De discipl.*  
*et habit.*  
*virgin. p.*  
164.

Part 2. He commanding all women how rich soever, *to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety, not with broidred hair, or gold or pearls or costly array; but (which becomes women professing Godliness) with good works.* S. Peter also requiring of them not the outward adorning of gold or fine apparel, but the *hidden ornament of the heart*; that though they were rich, yet they were to consult the honour and modesty of their profession, and might not go to the *utmost* bounds of what was lawful, some things being *lawful*, which were not *expedient*, especially when by their wanton and lascivious dress they might be a means to kindle in the breasts of others the flames of an unchast and unlawful passion, and so prove the occasion of their ruine; that if they thought themselves bound to use the estate that God had given them, God had shewn them a *more excellent way*, to relieve the *hungry*, and feed the *poor members of Christ*, that this was the best art of improving riches, and the way to lay them up in safe and unfailing treasuries, where we may be sure to reap the fruit of them another day, and not to throw them away

Vid. Con-  
stit. Apost.  
lib. 1. c. 3.  
p. 804.

away upon arts of beauty, upon vain and phantastick dresses. This is the sum of that good man's reasonings in the case.

Sometimes they pleaded, that they might beautifie and honour the body without any danger of violating their *chastity*, or setting open the case-ment for luxury to fly in upon them.

*Tertullian* answers, Let them that had a mind to't glory in the *flesh*, that for us we have no designs of glory, partly as being highly *unsuitable* to us, who by the law of God are under the profession of *humility*; partly because all glory (to us especially) is vain and swelling, how much more that which arises from the *flesh*; if we must glory, 'tis much fitter for us who follow *spiritual* things to please our selves in the *excellencies* of the *spirit* than in those of the *flesh*; let us rejoyce in those things, about which we are employed, and seek *glory* from those things, from which we hope for *salvation*. A Christian may indeed *glory* in the *flesh*, but it is when for the sake of *Christ* it is *torn* in pieces, that the *spirit* may be crowned, not that it may prove a snare to attract the eyes and sights of young

De cult.  
femin lib.  
2: c. 3. p.  
155.

Part 2. mens ungovernable passions after it; then, when 'tis tormented for confessing the *Christian* name, when a *woman* is found stronger than the *men* that torment her, when she suffers *fires*, or *crosses*, or *swords*, or *wild-beasts*, that she may receive the crown; these (says *Cyprian*) are the precious *jewels* of the flesh, these the much better *ornaments* of the *body*. So that (as *Tertullian* goes on) beauty being altogether so unuseful to us, ought to be *despised* by them that *want* it, and to be *neglected* by them that *have* it: a good woman that's content with her own native beauty, has not that occasion to betray her to lust and folly; and if she had, it would become her not to *promote*, but *hinder* it. Sometimes again they pretended, they did it only to *please* their *Husbands*, and that they might appear more *lovely* and *acceptable* to them: to which Plea, as being most specious and plausible, I observe especially *Three* things return'd by way of answer.

*Ut sup.*  
p. 163.

*Tert. ibid.*  
c. 4.

*Id. ibid.*

*First*, That to design the pleasing of their *Husbands* by such Arts as these, was altogether *needless*, seeing every wife and good man cannot but like his wife

wife best without them. No wife (says Part 2. *Tertullian*) can seem *deformed* to her own Husband, who doubtless was well enough pleased with her, either for her *temper*, or her *beauty* when he first made choice of her: Let none fear their *Husbands* will more distast and dislike them for abstaining from *artificial* compositions, for every husband is a rigid exacter of his wives chastity; and consequently they can be of no advantage to this end, whether he be a *believing* or an *unbelieving* Husband, a *Gentile* or a *Christian*: If a *Christian*, then he will not require any such *foreign* beauty, as not being taken with those accomplishments, which the *Gentiles* do account so; if a *Gentile*, then according to that vile opinion which they have of us *Christians*, let her do what she can, he will suspect her to be naught: For whose sake therefore should she so curiously dress, so delicately nurse and nourish up her beauty; for a *believing* Husband? he requires it not; for an *Infidel*? hee'l never believe it to be *true*; why then should she so much desire to *please* either one that *suspects* it, or one that does not *desire* it?

*Secondly,*

Part 2. *Secondly*, That these loose delicate Arts came too near the practice of lewd wanton *prostitutes*, who made use of these wayes and tricks for no other end but to *enveagle* men into their embraces: The bravery of Ornaments and Apparel, and the additional enticements of beauty are chiefly used (as *Cyprian* tells them) by Prostitutes and Unchast women; and that no womens garb is more *rich* and *gaudy*, than theirs, whose *modesty* is most *vile* and *cheap*. And this he tells us the *Scripture* shadows out by the *Woman that was arrayed in purple and scarlet-colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication*: But chaste and modest Virgins shun the drestes of the defiled, the habit of the shameless, the badges of the Stewes, the Ornaments of light wanton women. Whereas all other Creatures (says *Clemens Alexandrinus*) birds and beasts are content with their own natural beauty and colours; woman only as if she were inferiour to the beasts, thinks her self so deform'd as that there's need to repair the defect by external bought and borrowed beauty:

*Ubi supr.*  
p 165. vid.  
*Tert. de*  
*culi. sc.*  
*min. lib.*  
1. c. 4.

*Padag. lib.*  
3. c. 2. p.  
220.

Part 2. beauty: for while by infinite Arts of curious and costly drestes (*some where- of he there particularly mentions*) they seek to *ensnare* them, who children-like are apt to admire every thing that's strange and gaudy, they shew themselves to be women that have put off shame and modesty; and whoever (*says he*) calls them so, shall do them no wrong, as carrying the *signs* and representations of it in their very faces.

*Thirdly*, They mainly insisted upon this, that these Arts were *injurious* to God, and a *disparagement* to his workman-ship. We are not (*says Tertulian*) to seek after neatness and finery beyond what is *simple* and *sufficient*, and what *pleases* God; against whom they offend, who are not satisfied with his workman-ship: an argument which he there prosecutes with great severity. *S. Cyprian* treads in his *Masters* steps and prosecutes the same argument with a great deal of zeal and sharpness; amongst other things he tells us, that these additional Arts are a bold and *sacrilegious* attempt, and an high contempt of God, that it is to *reform* what God has *form'd*, to alter and change his work, and as much as they can

*De Cult.*  
*Fæmin lib.*  
2. c. 5. p.  
156. vid.  
*Constit.*  
*App. lib. 1.*  
c. 8 p 823.  
*Cl. Alex.*  
*Padag. lib.*  
3. c. 11. p.  
249.

*De Discipl.*  
*& hab.*  
*Virg. p. 166.*



Part 2. can to *disfigure* that person, which God has *made after his own image and likeness*: that such a one has cause to fear, lest when the day of *Resurrection* comes, he that *made* them should not *know* them, nor receive them when they come for the promised rewards. Accordingly he brings in the great *Censor* and *Judge* of the world thus speaking to such a person: *This is none of my workman-ship, nor is this our image and likeness; thou hast defil'd thy skin with false compositions, chang'd thy hair into an adulterous colour, thy face counterfeit, thy shape corrupt, thy countenance quite another thing, thou canst not behold God, thine eyes not being the same which God created, but which the Evil Spirit has infected; thou hast imitated the fiery, sparkling and glittering eyes of the Serpent: of thine enemy hast thou learnt to be over-trim and neat, and with him like to receive thy portion.* And are not these (*says he*) things fit to be thought of by the servants of God, and to be the daily objects of their *care and fear*?

*Histor. Relig. c. 9. in vit Petr. p. 343.*

I cannot but in this place set down a passage which *Theodoret* reports of his own *Mother*, that in her younger years having

having a distemper in one of her eyes, which had baffled all the Arts of *Physick*, she was at length perswaded to make her address to one *Peter*, famous for the gift of *Miracles*; who liv'd near *Antioch*, a very severe and ascetick course of life: and to render her self (as she thought) the more *considerable* in his eye, she put on all her *bravery*, her richest robes, her *pendants*, and chains of *pearl*, and whatever could render her *fine* and *splendid*. No sooner was she come to him, but the severe and *uncomplemental* man at first sight bluntly entertained her with this discourse: Tell me, *Daughter*; suppose an excellent *Artist* having drawn a picture according to all the laws and rules of Art, should expose and hang it forth to view, and another rude and unskilful *bungler* coming by should find fault with this excellent piece, and attempt to *amend* it, draw the *eye-brows* to a greater length, make the complexion *whiter*, or add more *colour* to the cheeks; would not the true Author be iustly angry, that his Art was *disparaged* and undervalued, and *needless* additions made to the piece by an unskilful hand? And so 'tis here; can we

Part 2, we think that the great *Artificer* of the world, the *Maker* and *Former* of our Nature, is not, and that justly, angry, when you *accuse* his incomprehensible Wisdom and Perfection, of Unskilfulness, and want of Knowledge? for you would not add your *reds, whites, or blacks*, did you not think your bodies needed these additions; and while you think so, you *condemn* your Creator for *weakness* and *ignorance*: But know, that he has *Power* answerable to his *Will*, and as the *Psalmist* tells us, *the Lord has done all things as he pleased*: and he that takes care of what is *good* for all, would not give what is *evil* and *hurtful* unto any. Corrupt not therefore the *Image* of God, nor attempt to *add*, what he in his infinite wisdom thought not fit to *give*: study not to invent this adulterate beauty, which even to chaste persons oft proves a cause of ruine, by becoming a snare to them that look upon it. The *Holy Man* said no more, and the *Young Lady* presently found her self wounded with the force of his Reasonings, but would not leave him till she had obtained the end of her errand, which he granted not without great importunity, and an humble  
and

and modest referring all to the *Grace of God*, and so sent her home with a double cure, her *body* cured of its distemper, and her *mind* of its pride and vanity; and she ever after led a most humble, sober and pious life.

But it were to transcribe whole Books, to tell you what the Fathers (these three that I have so oft mention'd especially) have said in this case, the cause being not more *copiously* than *elegantly* managed by them; and thither I refer the capable Reader, who has any further curiosity for these things. The *true* beauty of a Christian in those dayes lay not in *external* and adventitious ornaments, but in the *goodness* and *purity* of the mind: The beauty of the body (says *Clemens* of *Alexandria*) consists in a *good complexion*, and in *apt symmetry*, and proportion of its parts; but the greatest beauty in the world is that of the *Soul*, when tis *adorn'd* with the *Holy Spirit*, and the excellent *Graces* of it, *Justice*, *Prudence*, *Fortitude*, *Temperance*, the *love of Goodness*, and *Modesty*, which is the brightest and most lovely ornament that the eye of man can behold: It is not (says he) the exterior aspect of  
the

Part 2.

Padag. lib.  
3. c. 11. p.  
248.

Ibid. c. 2.  
p. 216.

Part 2. the man that is to be regarded, but the mind that is to be furnished and adorned with goodness and virtue; and therefore he wittily compares those women that *curiously* trick and trim up the body, but neglect how 'tis with the soul within, to the *Egyptian* Temples; look upon their *out-side*, and they are most *splendid* and *magnificent*, encompassed with delicate Groves, built with large entries, and stately *Portico's*, surrounded with several rows of *Pillars*, the walls both within and without set off with *stones* of several Countries, curiously wrought and carv'd, the Temples themselves garnish'd with *Gold*, *Silver*, *Amber*, and all the glittering and *precious* stones that *India* or *Ethiopia* can afford; but enter within them and enquire for the *Deity* that is there worshipped, and you shall be gravely shewed behind a curtain a *Cat*, or a *Crocodile*, or a *Serpent* of that Country, or some such *ill-favoured* beast, which is the *residentiary* or *tutelar* deity of that place. And just such (*says he*) do those *women* seem to me, who trim themselves with *Gold*, and are taken up in curling their hair, painting their faces, blacking their eyes, colouring

ing their locks, and other undue Arts Part 2. of softness and luxury, beautifying the *outward rayle and fence*; but if a man look within the veil and covering of the Temple, what is under all this gayness and finery, he shall be so far from meeting with what is truly beautiful, that it will excite his horror and aversion; for he shall not find the *Image* of God dwelling there, as might reasonably be expected; but instead thereof some *filthy* and treacherous *beast* that possesses the most inward recesses of the Soul, a *lustful Ape*, or that *crafty Serpent* that devours the understanding of a man, and turns his Soul into a *nest* or *den*, full of most deadly venom, and the poyson of his error and deceit.

I conclude this with the account which *S. Gregory* gives of his Sister *Gorgonia*, that she used no *Gold* to make her fine, no *yellow hair*, ordered into knots and curls, nor any other tricks to make her head a *Scene* and *Pageantry*, no loose and *transparent* garments, no *lustre* of stones and jewels, enlightning the air round about, and reflecting splendour upon them that wear them, no devices and arts of painting,

*Naxian. in  
Laud. Gor.  
Or. 11. p.  
181.*

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Part 2. no affectation of beauty that may be easily bought, no counter-working Gods Creation, dishonouring, reproaching, covering his workman-ship with false and deceitful colours, suffering a *spurious & supposititious* beauty to steal away that *natural* Image, which ought to be kept intire to God and the future state: all this was far from her; and though she very well understood the several *modes* and *garbs* of *bravery* amongst women, yet she thought none so honorable as the *manner* of her life, and that *inward* brightness that was lodg'd in her mind: the only *redness* that pleased her, was that which was the fruit of *blushing* and *modesty*; no other *whiteness* but what came through *fasting* and *abstinence*; leaving *fucus's* and *paintings*, and *living pictures*, and fading beauty to those that belong to Playes and *Theatres*, and to such, for whom to *blush* and be *ashamed* is a *shame* and a *disgrace*. To which I add that of *Tertullian*, who after he had smartly condemned and confuted the Arts of unlawful beauty, the vanity of going in too curious, costly and excessive dresses, concludes with this counsel to the women of his time, to cloth themselves

Ce cult.  
sæmin. lib.  
2. c. 13. ad  
fin.

## Ch.4. Primitive Christianity. 67

selves with the *silks* of *honesty*, the *fine* Part 2. *vestures* of *piety*, the *purple* of *modesty*; and being *thus beautified and adorn'd* (says he) *God himself will be your Lover.*

### CHAP. IV.

#### Of their great Temperance and Abstinence.

*A vicious curiosity about meats and drinks a great temptation. Severely forbidden by the Christian Law. The ancient Christians curious only of such diet as ministr'd to health. They gratified not ease and delicacy. The great inconveniencies of intemperance either in meats or drinks. Their chief care about spiritual food. For other things content with any provisions, manifested in several instances. An over-nice and superstitious abstinence from some kinds of food, condemned. The instance of Alcibiades the Martyr out of Eusebius. Christians unjustly accused by the Heathens of excess and prodigality in their feasting.*

Part 2.

Thyestean suppers laid to their charge. The charge in both parts of it denied, and fully refuted by Tertullian, and other Christian Apologists.

**A**mongst the many temptations that besiege the life of man, there is scarce any into which we are more easily betrayed, than into a *vicious curiosity* about meats and drinks, and the excesses of an unruly appetite; therefore it is that the Christian Religion does so frequently inculcate upon us the Precepts of *Sobriety* and *Temperance*; to be *temperate in all things*, to watch and be sober, to cast off the works of darkness, to walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in excess of wine, revellings, and banquetings; to take heed that our hearts be not at any time over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and that we be not as the men of the old world, brutishly taken up with eating and drinking when the flood came and swept all away. The Law of Christ commands us to fast often, to keep under the body, and to make no provision for the flesh; if nature regularly governed be content with

with little, Religion will teach us to be content with less. These Rules the first Christians exactly transcribed into their lives, being the greatest instances of real abstinence and mortification, which they both *practised* themselves, and *pressed* upon others: they knew very well that God had given men a Charter of freedom indifferently to use the Creatures, and to enjoy them in some degree, not only for necessity but *delight*; but yet were afraid to go so far as they might, or to do any thing that might look towards excess, or argue an irregular and unsober mind; they contented themselves with such provisions as were conducive to *health* and *strength*, without any studied seeking after those that were more *luscious* and *delightful*. 'Tis very true what S. Basil observes, that by reason of mens different ages and course of life, their different tempers and constitutions of body, and other circumstances, no one fixed and certain rule can be prescribed in this case: but yet our food and diet ought for the main to be regulated by the general end of it, which is not wantonly to please the palate, but to minister to health, and to repair the weakness

Perish and decays of Nature. Many (says *Clemens Alexandrinus*) like brute beasts *live* only that they may *eat*; but for us we are commanded to *eat* that we may *live*; for food and pleasure is not the *work* and design for which we live in the world, our residence here being in order to an incorruptible life; and therefore our nourishment ought to be easie and simple, and such as is subservient to the two main ends of life, *health* and *strength*. We ought to chuse such food (as *Justin Martyr* tells his friends) not as may gratifie our *ease* and *delicacy*, but make our lives *useful* and *serviceable*; and if at any time overtaken with want, we should quietly acquiesce in that state: and therefore a little after he smartly declaims against all excess. Wine (says he) is neither to be drunk daily to excess, nor to be used as commonly as *water*; both indeed are Gods *Creatures*; but *water* necessary, *wine* given only to help and relieve the body; which [*immoderately taken*] chains up the *tongue*, sparkles *fire* out of the *eyes*, makes the *leggs* tremble, and the understanding being gone, readily takes off its cup of deadly *poysan*; contrary to Gods Ordination

Epist. ad  
Z. p. 6. & Se-  
ren. p. 506.

ibid. p. 512

tion it turns the peaceful *instruments* Part 2.  
of Husbandry into *swords* and *spears*. It may indeed be necessary sparingly to drink wine both Winter and Summer; but he that drinks it to excess, as a man that takes over-much of a medicine, like a dog or a swine betrayes his own shame. But above all men in the world it least becomes us [*Christians*] as if we were votaries to luxury, to abuse the Creatures of God, and to make use of *thirst* as a pretence to drunkenness, seeing we ought to drink no more than what will serve to *quench* our thirst; not like those who swallowing down wine, as men do drink in a burning feaver, quickly make an end of themselves through their intemperance. Nor are we less to take heed of *Gluttony*, contenting our selves with a *spare* diet, and such only as is *necessary*; not giving way to the infinite and unsatisfied cravings of a nice and intemperate appetite, which will have a thousand pretences to defend it self; but ruling our selves according to the wise sentence of him who said, *τεσπεύετε τὸν ὕμνον τοῦ κυρίου, ὅτι ἐσμεν ἐκ τῆς γῆς καὶ εἰς τὴν γῆν ἀποστέλλομεθα, καὶ τὸν καρπὸν τῆς γῆς ἐσθίουμεν καὶ ποτίζομεθα, ὅτι ἡ γῆς τοῦ κυρίου ἐστὶν ἡμεῖς*, that we are to eat only to *satisfie* our hunger. Thus that ancient Father. To this purpose

Part 2. also *Clemens Alexandrinus* discourses at large, representing the great evils and inconveniencies of gluttony and excess, that it wasts the *Estate*, ruins the *Body* by impairing its health, debauching the stomach, deflouring its tast, begetting an ill habitude and temper, and sowing it with the seeds of all diseases; it dulls the *mind*, and renders it inept and sluggish, and prepares it for the entertainment of any vice or wickedness; that although we are not absolutely bound to abstain from variety of meats, yet we are not to make them our desire or study, especially such as savour of niceness and delicacy, and are apt to pamper and excite lust and wantonness; for though 'tis true all things were especially made for mans sake, yet is it not convenient to make use of all, and at some times less than at others; to the advantageous use of a thing, respect being to be had, not only to the *thing* it self, but to the *time*, *occasion*, and *manner* of it: that therefore our meals for the main should be *light* and *easse*, not mixed with *variety* of dainties, but such as may prepare for *fasting*, and the exercises of Religion. Upon this account *S. Cyprian* in an Epistle, wherein he

*Ad Presbyt. et Diac. Ep.*  
7. p. 18.

gives

gives directions about Prayer, advises Part 2. them (and to make the counsel more effectual, tells them, that he was *warn'd* of it by immediate *revelation* from God) to eat and drink soberly and sparingly, that outward snares might not enfeeble that heavenly vigour and sprightliness that was in their breasts, lest their minds being over-charged with too plentiful meals might be less *watchful unto prayer*. The same counsel *S. Hierom* gives to *Lata* about the Education of her Daughter, that her diet should be thin and mean, and that she should never eat more, than she might arise with some *appetite*, so as that after meals she might be presently fit either to *read* or *sing Psalms*.

When at any time invited to publick solemnities, as *marriages*, and the like, the prudence of the Church thought fit to lay restraints upon them, and to forbid them light and *ludicrous* actions, as *leaping* or *dancing*, but that they should dine and sup *gravely* and *modestly* as becomes Christians.

The chief care of Christians then was to become partakers *τῆς αἰῶνος ζωῆς* *τῆς βίας*, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* styles it, of that *divine food* that

is

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*Ad Presbyt. et Diacon. Ep. 7. p. 18.*

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is

*Ad Leta. tom. 1. p. 57.*

*Conc. Laod. Can. 53.*

*Ib. p. 144.*



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Part 2. *is from above*, and that only is capable to give real satisfaction, little regarding what provisions they had (so they had but any) for that part that dwelt here below. When *Julian* the Emperour to raise money for his Wars began to squeeze and oppress the Christians, he sent amongst others to *S. Basil* (who had formerly been his fellow-student at *Athens*) for one thousand pounds; the answer he sends him was, that it could not be expected there, where he had not so much provision beforehand as would serve for one day; that there were no arts of *cookery* at his house, nor knives *stain'd* with the blood of slaughtered provisions; that his greatest dainties were a few *pot-herbs*, a piece of bread, and a little soure *vapid* wine: no such exceedings as to stupifie his senses with fumes arising from a loaded stomach, and to render them incapable to discharge their functions through intemperance and excess. *Chrysostom* commends *Olympias* not more for the modesty of her Garb, than the meanness and sobriety of her diet, to which she had so us'd her self that she had got the perfect mastery over all undue appetites and inclinations, and

*Basil. Ep.*  
*208. tom.*  
*3. p. 226.*  
*confer So.*  
*erat. lib. 3.*  
*c. 13. p.*  
*185.*

*Ep. 2. ad O.*  
*lymp. tom.*  
*4. p. 616.*

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and had not only *bridled* the horse, but Part 2. *tamed* and reduced him into an intire subjection, and taught her stomach to receive only so much meat and drink as was enough to keep her alive and in health. This indeed was the great end of their signal abstinence in those days, that by subduing the *flesh* they might keep the stricter hand over the inordinate motions of *corrupt nature*. When *Celsus* accused the *Jews*, and in them obliquely the Christians for needlessly abstaining from *swines flesh*, and some other sorts of food, affirming this to be no such great matter, when the *Pythagoreans* wholly abstain'd from eating any *living creature*, who yet were never thought the better, or the more dear to God for it; *Origen* answers, that what-ever reason the *Jews* did it for (God having appointed the difference) this concern'd not *Christians*, that 'tis not *what enters in at the mouth that defiles the man, nor does meat commend us to God*, nor do we think this abstinence any such great matter; nor yet do we so indulge the belly, as to affect or pursue such delights; that there's a vast difference between *us* and the *Pythagoreans* in this affair: they indeed

*Orig. cont.*  
*Cels. lib. 5.*  
*p. 259.*  
*264.*

Part 2. indeed abstain upon the account of their absurd and fabulous doctrine of the souls *transmigration*, or passing out of one body into another, and so forbear to kill or eat any living creature, lest haply they may destroy and devour their own *friends* or *children*: but we in all our abstinence do it only *to keep under the body and to bring it into subjection, endeavouring to mortifie the deeds of the body, to expel and extinguish our members that are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, and every evil concupiscence and desire*: where he fully vindicates the Christians in their abstemiousness and temperance from doing it out of any vain and foolish affectation, any nice and singular Opinion, any base and sordid, morose or unsociable temper; they were careful to keep the *mean*, and to avoid *sordidness* as well as *Luxury*; nor did they profess themselves enemies to the provisions of humane life any further, than as they were inconsistent with the ends of sobriety and religion. As may appear from a *memorable* passage related by *Eusebius* out of the letter of the Churches of *Lyons and Vien in France*

Hist. Eccl.  
lib. 5. c. 3.  
p. 167.

to

to those in *Asia*. *Alcibiades* (one of Part 2. those who shortly after suffer'd Martyrdom) had accustom'd himself to a very rigid and sordid kind of life, rejecting all other sorts of food, except only *bread* and *water*: and this he did both before and after he was in prison; which it seems had an ill influence upon others; whereupon *Attalus* one of the most eminent of those famous Martyrs, the day after his first being exposed in the *Amphitheatre* had it reveal'd to him (for as yet, says the Historian, the Divine Grace had not withdrawn it self, but they had the Holy Spirit as their immediate Councillour to instruct them; which by the way may give countenance to those frequent *visions* and *divine condescensions* which *Cyprian* speaks of in his Epistles: To this *Attalus* it was reveal'd) that *Alcibiades* did amiss in refusing to use the *Creatures* of God, and in thereby giving a scandal and an offence to others: upon which he laid aside his *singularity*, and with all thankfulness to God promiscuously ate any kind of food.

From the whole of what has been said it's very evident, what little reason the Heathens had to accuse the Christians

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Part 2. stians (in their *agapæ* or love-feasts especially) of *excess* and *prodigality*; for that they did *Tertullian* expressly affirms; Our *little suppers* (*says he*) besides as being guilty of other wickedness they traduce as *prodigal*, saying of us as *Diogenes* did of the people of *Megara*, that they *supp'd* as if they meant to *dye* to morrow. Nay, what were infinitely horrid and barbarous, they commonly charg'd them with *Thyestean* suppers, and eating mans flesh. To the first part of the charge, concerning their prodigality, *Tertullian* answers, that they could easilier see a mote in anothers eye, than a beam in their own; if they look'd home they would find that 'twas their own *tribes* and *precincts*, wherein the very air was corrupted with the unsavoury *fumes* of their loaded tables, and over-charged stomachs; and yet all this was pass'd by, and only the poor Christians *Triclinium* call'd in question; that if they had any feast it was a *love-feast*, and what-ever cost was laid out upon it, was expended not for *vain-glory*, but upon the accounts of *Piety* and Religion; not to nourish *Parasites* and flatterers, but to refresh the *Poor*: that the order

*Apol. c. 39.*  
*p. 32.*  
*Athenag.*  
*legat pro.*  
*Christian.*  
*p. 37.*

*Ibid.*

Ch. 4. Primitive Christianity. 79

order of the feast was as *sober* and regular as the *cause* was *honest*, going no further than modesty would admit; they *prayed* to God before they ventur'd upon his Creatures, ate but what suffic'd *hunger*, drank no more than consist'd with *sober* and *modest* men; and fed so, as remembering they were to rise *at night* to worship God: when they had done, they sung *psalms*, either of their own *composure*, or out of the *Holy Volumes*, and as they *begun*, so they *ended* the feast with Prayer, and then departed with the same care to preserve their modesty and chastity; so that they appear'd not so much to have *feasted* at supper, as to have *fed* upon discipline and order. *So he*. For the other part of the charge, their feeding upon *mans flesh* at this common supper, 'twas a suggestion so *savage* and *barbarous*, as could have found belief with nothing but the very *spirit* of malice; we shall again meet with this objection in another place, and shall therefore here only note out of their *Apologist*, *Athenag.* that it was charge never offer'd to be made *good* against them, nor prov'd in any of those many thousand tryals which the Christians had had in all parts

*Ibid. p. 38.*

Part 2. parts of the Empire; that it was very unlikely they should be guilty of eating *humane* flesh, who did not think it lawful to be present at the *gladiatory-sports* where men were *slain*, or so much as to *tast* any *blood* at all.

Euseb. hist.  
Eccles. ubi  
supr. p. 158.  
cap. 1.

So *Biblias* the Martyr told her enemies, when being reproached with this in the midst of her torments, she cried out, *how is it possible that we should devour Infants, as you charge us, who think it not lawful so much as to tast the blood of any Creature.* For even till then, and a long time after they observ'd that *Canon* of the first *Apostolick* Council, *to abstain from things strangled and from blood.* So far were they from being either *barbarous* or *luxurious*. No, our feasts (as he says in

Min. Fel.  
p. 26.

*Minutius Fælix*) are not only *chast*, but *sober*, we indulge not our selves in banquets nor make our feasts with wine, but temper our chearfulness with gravity and seriousness. And indeed their often watchings and fastings, and their constant observance of the strictest parts of devotion sufficiently shewed how little they pamper'd or indulg'd the flesh, the *signs* whereof they every where carried in their very  
faces;

faces; and this was so notorious, that Part 2. their very enemies reproached them with their *trembling* joints, and their *pale* ghastly looks. And *Lucian* giving an account of the *Christian* Assembly into which he tells us *Critias* was brought to be made a *Proselyte*, describes them to be a *company of persons with their heads hanging down, and pale faces*, which certainly did not arise from their fear of suffering (for no men in the world were ever so willing, nay so desirous of laying down their lives as they) but from their frequent *abstinence* and *fasting*. To which purpose *S. Basil's* Comment is most apposite; where commending *temperance*, or as he calls it *Continence*, using the word in its largest sense; other *Virtues* (*says he*) being mainly exercised in *secret*, are not altogether so *visible* to the eyes of men; whereas *continence* where-ever it is, will at first sight betray it self: for as a good complexion, and an excellent constitution of body peculiarly design a man to be an *Athletes* or *Champion*; so leanness of body, and that *pale-ness* which is the fruit of continence, evidence a *Christian* to be a real *Champion*.

Pallidi,  
trepidat,  
pud eundem p. 10.

Philopat.  
tom. 2. p.  
1007.

Reg. sup.  
disput. 12.  
terreg. 17.  
p. 559.

Part 2. *Pion* for the commands of *Christ*, vanquishing his enemy in the weakness of his body, and shews how able he is to contend in the cause of Piety and Vertue: The very sight of such a man must needs be of great advantage to affect us, to behold him sparingly and moderately using even those things that are necessary, not paying nature its tribute without some regret, begrutching the little time that he spends about it, and therefore making hast to get from the table to return to his better exercises and employments.

## CHAP. V.

## Of their singular Continence and Chastity.

Their admirable Continence discovered in several particulars. Their abstinence from marriage. Their marrying only to comply with the end of the institution. Seldom married more than once. Their continence admired by Heathens. The Fathers generally severe against second marriages. The moderate

moderate judgement of Clemens Alex- andrinus in the case. The Canons of several Councils concerning it. Three sorts of digamy, or second marriages. Their shunning all occasions and appearances of lightness and immodesty: abstaining from publick meetings, feasts, plays, &c. Constantine's Law that no widow should be forced to appear at publick Tribunals. Another of Theodosius, that none should marry within twelve compleat months after her husbands decease. The promiscuous use of Baths, forbidden both by Canon and Civil Laws. Unmarried persons, especially of Ecclesiastick relation, not familiarly to converse together. Mulieres *Zueicanlos*, who. How brought in: condemned by the Council of Antioch, and that of Nice. Clandestine marriages dis-allowed. Their abhorring all immodest pictures and discourses. The great modesty of Gorgonia. Their valuing chastity above life: submitting to any kind of death rather than violate it: Many chusing to kill themselves rather than be deslaur'd. Several instances of it. Impurity in Christians bewail'd as a great scandal: punished by the Church with very severe

Part 2.

were penalties. Several passages out of the Fathers and Councils noted to that purpose. Christians accused by the Heathens of incest and adultery. The summe of the charge. Their Answer. The Heathens very unfit to bring in this charge, being themselves so notoriously guilty: whole Nations, their wisest Philosophers, their very Gods themselves: this fully proved against them. The very Gentiles tacitly confessed the Christians innocent, by condemning them to be forcibly prostituted. A part of their religion not to give way to wanton looks or unchaste desires. The eminent prevalency of Christianity in converting persons from uncleanness and debauchery, pleaded and asserted. The original of the accusation enquired into. Found to arise from the beastly practices of the Gnosticks, &c. who though guilty of the most notorious villanies, and of these in particular, yet shrowded themselves under the general name of Christians. Some forced through fear to confess the Christians guilty of these crimes.

A Third

Part 2.

A Third considerable instance of that sobriety and moderation for which the Christians were so renowned of old, was their **Continence**, and abstaining from all manner of uncleanness, which is that Vertue that we properly call *Chastity*; a Vertue for which how eminent they were (notwithstanding what their enemies heavily charged upon them to the contrary, of which afterwards) we shall take notice of in some few particulars.

First, The Christians of those times were so far from breaking in upon any Unchaste embraces, that they frequently abstained even from lawful pleasures, and kept themselves even from the honourable and undefiled bed, never marrying all their life. We are (says *Octavius*) chaste in our speech, and chaste in our bodies, and very many of us, though we do not boast on't, do inviolably preserve a perpetual Virginity; and are so far from any extravagant desires after Incestuous mixtures, that many stand at a distance from the most chaste and modest embraces. Thus *Justin Martyr* tells the Emperours, that amongst the Christians there were a great

Minut.  
Fœl. p. 26.

Apol. 2. 3.  
62.

Part 2. great many of either Sex, who had from their child-hood been educated in the Christian discipline, who for sixty or seventy years had kept themselves *single* and uncorrupt, and he wished the like could be shewn in all other sorts of men. To the same purpose another *Apologist*; 'tis very easie (*says he*) to find many amongst us, both men and women, who remain unmarried even in *old age*, conceiving that in this state they shall have fitter opportunities of drawing near to God. Not that they who persever'd in this course of *Celibate* did combine themselves into distinct Societies, and bind themselves under an *oath of perpetual Virginity* (as the humour was in *after ages*) for of this not the least shadow appears in any of the writings of those times, they lived promiscuously (till towards the end of the *third Century*) applyed themselves to the business of their place and station, and only lived *single*, that in those troublesome and hazardous times of persecution, they might be less ensnared with the entanglements of the world, and be more free for the exercises of Religion.

Arbenag.  
leg. pro  
Christian.  
p. 37.

*Secondly*, When they did marry, Part 2. they generally profess'd they did it only to comply with the great end of the *institution*, viz. the propagation of mankind; not to gratifie wanton and brutish desires, but to answer the great end of nature, that humane society might not fail; either (*says they*) we *Justin Martyr i. b. l. p. 71. Arbenag. ibid.* marry not at all, but keep our selves *always* continent; or if we do marry, it is for no other end but the bringing forth and the bringing up of children; who ever amongst us takes a Wife, according to the Laws prescribed us, he reckons he does it only for the begetting of children; within this his desires are bounded and limited; as the Husbandman concerns himself no further in tilling his ground and sowing of his corn, than to bring forth the crop at Harvest. Hence it was that they seldom married more than *once*: We willingly contain our selves (as he speaks in *M. Felix*) within the bound of single marriage, and either know but *one* woman (and that meerly out of a desire of children) or *none*. The first knot being loos'd by death, they very rarely tied a second: which gained great honour and reputation both

Part 2. both to them and to their Religion with the *Gentiles* amongst whom they lived. *Chrysostom* tells us that a discourse hapning on a time between him and his *Master*, who was a *Gentile*, concerning his *Mother*, being told that she was a *Widow*, and after enquiry concerning her age, being answered that she was forty years old, and that she had liv'd twenty years of the time a *Widow*, the man was surpris'd with a strange admiration; and cried out before all the company, *behold* (saith he) *what brave women there are amongst the Christians*. The truth is, such was the heavenly zeal and temper of the first Ages of Christianity, that they would have no more to do with the World, than they needs must, but industriously shun'd all its burdens and encumbrances, amongst which they especially reckoned marriage, a state not rashly to be engag'd in; for once it was allowable, but for a second time *inexcusable*. And indeed it cannot be denied but that many of the Ancient Fathers, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Hierom*, and others did inveigh against *second marriages* with too much bitterness and severity, violently pressing many passages in Scripture

*Ad vid. junior. tom. 4 p. 458.*

Scripture to serve the cause, straining Part 2. the string many times till it crack'd again; and not sticking to censure and condemn second marriages as little better than *adultery*. Hear what one of the *Apologists* says to it: Amongst us every man either remains as he was born, or engages himself in one only marriage; for as for second marriages, they are but a more plausible and *decorous* kind of adultery; our Lord assuring us, that *who-ever puts away his wife and takes another, commits adultery*; which place, as also another of like importance, how perversly he interprets, and impertinently applies to his purpose, I am not willing to remember. *Clemens Alexandrinus* speaks in the case with much more *modesty* and moderation; As for those to whom God has given the gift of *absolute* continence, we think them happy: we admire the *gravity* and stayedness of those that content themselves with a single marriage: but yet say withall that compassion ought to be had of others, and that *we should bear one another's burdens*, lest he who *seems to stand fair, do fall himself*: and as for second marriages that of the Apostle is to take

*Arhenag. ut supr.*

*stromat. lib. 3. p. 428. vid. Epiphan. Hares. 48. p. 178. Cyrill. ad Ilum. Catech. 4. p. 90.*



Part 2. take place, *if they cannot contain, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn.* However 'tis certain the Fathers of old generally did what they could to discourage second marriages. The Antient *Canons* (as *Zonaras* tells us) suspended such persons from the Communion for a whole year; and the Council of *Laodicea* though it determine not the time, yet it requires that they should spend some small time at least in *penance*, in fasting and prayer, before they be received to the Communion. By the *Canons* that are call'd *Apostolical*, who ever after Baptism has engag'd in a second marriage is rendred incapable of any degree in the Ministry: accordingly *Epiphanius* reports of one *Joseph*, whom he knew, a converted Jew, and advanced to the dignity of a *Count* by *Constantine* the Great, that when the *Arrians* would have laid hands upon him to have made him Bishop, he got off by this wile, by pretending himself to have been twice married. But though the Fathers and Antient Councils were thus severe in this case, yet the rigour of their censure will be much abated, if what some tell us be true, that many of their passages

In Can. 7.  
Concil. Ne-  
ocesar.

Can. 1.

Can. 17.

Harv. 30.  
p. 61.

Part 2. sages are not levell'd against successive marriages, but against having two wives at the same time: for as a learned man has observed, there were three sorts of *digamy*; the first a mans having two wives at once, this was condemn'd by the *Roman Laws*: the second, when the former wife being dead the man married a second time: a third, when for any slight cause a man put away his wife by a bill of *divorce*, and married another, which though then frequently practis'd, and conniv'd at (if not allow'd) by the *Laws* of those Times, was yet prohibited by the decrees of the Church, and of this last sort (*says he*) many of the Antient *Canons* are to be understood.

Jussell.  
not in can.  
1. Conc.  
Laod.

Thirdly, They were infinitely careful to shun all occasions and appearances of lightness and immodesty, whatever might tend to inveagle their senses, and to debauch their mind and manners, nay what-ever might but give a suspicion of wantonness and incontinence: They declin'd as much as might be going to all Publick Meetings, such as Feasts, Plays, Shews, &c. Therefore *Cyprian* severely chides with some *Virgins* for being present at Weddings, where

De discipl.  
Ghab. Vir-  
gin. p. 167.

Part 2. where they laughed freely, could not but hear loose discourses, see uncomely carriages, feed upon luxurious dishes, all which must needs not only *kindle*, but add *fuel* to the *fire*, and fill their minds with indecent thoughts and desires. S. Hierom on the other hand does as much commend some whom he knew, who always kept at home on *festival* days to avoid the crowd and gazes of the people, and would never go abroad at those times, when they could not venture into the publick without the greatest care and custody over themselves. For this reason Constantine made a Law that *Matrons* should not be forc'd upon the account of debt to come out of their own houses to appear before the publick *tribunals*, but that the business should be decided in such way, as might not betray the modesty of that Sex; and when afterwards the fervour of Christianity began to abate apace, and persons had in a great measure lost that huge reverence which former times had for continence and chastity; Theodosius to restrain them a little within the bounds of decency, provided by a Law that *no woman* of what quality or rank

De Virg.  
servand p.  
71. tom. 1.

Cod. Theod.  
lib. 1. Tit.  
10. l. 1.

Ibid. lib. 3.  
Tit. 8. l. 1.  
vid Gotthofred. in loc.

soever should *marry* again within a year Part 2. at least (*i.e.* within twelve *full* months, whereas under the old *Roman* Laws, the time of mourning was but ten, as a Learned *Interpreter* of that Law observes) after her husbands death, and this he ratified by a double penalty, a note of perpetual *infamy* to be set upon the offending person, and the loss of her whole *dower* and what-ever estate her husband had bequeathed her, which was to go to the children she had by him, or if none, to his next of kin. By the *Laodicean* Council not only Clergy-men, and such as have entered upon a state of continency, but all Christian men whatsoever are forbidden to use the same *common baths* with women. And for very good reason; it being a thing (as *Zonaras* observes) both *shameful* and uncomely in it self, and *pernicious* in its consequence: for how easily does an unlawful *flame* kindle from such a *spark*? and when humane nature is of it self so ready to *boyl* over, who would pour *oyl* upon the *fire*? a thing ever look'd upon as repugnant to all the Laws of modesty, yea even by *them that are without*; this being (says the *Council*) one of the chiefest

Can. 30.  
vid. Conc.  
in Tull.  
Can. 77.

Part 2. chiefest things which the very Heathens *condemn*, and for which they censure and reproach us. Parallel to this, *Photius* and his Commentator *Balsamon* tell us of a Law of the Emperour *Justinian*, making it a sufficient cause of *divorce*, and losing her *dowry*, for a woman either to *feast* or *bath* in the company of other men without the leave and consent of her husband. Indeed in the first and purer times they took all imaginable care, that unmarried persons, especially such as were of *Ecclesiastical* cognizance, or had devoted themselves to a severer course of piety, should not commonly converse together. *Cyprian* writing to *Pomponius* about the Virgins that had taken profession of continence upon them, but lived too familiarly with some persons that belonged to the Church, charges him that Men and Virgins should not only not *sleep* near one another, but not *dwell* together in the same house, lest the infirmity of their Sex, and the slipperiness of their youth should betray them into the *snare of the devil*. Wherefore he commends *Pomponius* for having suspended the *Deacon* and the rest that had kept such famili-

Nomocan.  
τιτλ. θ.  
κερ. λ. α. ρ.  
104.

Epist. 62. p.  
98. vid. sup.  
Conc. 1.  
Carthag.  
Can. 3, 4.

ar

Part 2. ar correspondence with those Virgins; and ordered that they should not be absolved, till they had sufficiently testified their repentance, and made it appear by satisfactory evidence that no unlawful familiarity had passed between them, and that if ever they returned to the like co-habitation, greater penalties should be inflicted upon them. The foundation of which ill custom doubtless sprung, or at least took encouragement from hence; in those first times of Christianity it was usual for *Clergy-men*, such especially as were sent up and down to preach the Gospel, to have some grave and sober woman along with them, who might be helpful and assisting to them, and who was neither *Wife* nor *Concubine*, but taken in either upon the account of necessary attendance, or the pretence of piety. These women in the writings of the Church (wherein there is frequent mention of them) are called *Συνετακτοι*, such as were brought in, taken into the house as *Domestick* assistants to *Ecclesiastick* persons. But this proving matter of scandal and inconvenience, was not only cried out against by *private* Fathers, but by *publick* Synods; the

Part 2. the Council of *Antioch* held in the  
Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 7. c. 30. p. 281. Reign of *Aurelian* the Emperour, Anno  
 two hundred seventy and two, in a *Synodical* Epistle wherein they censure  
 the doctrines and practices of *Paulus*  
*Samosatenus*, condemn this among the  
 rest, that he and his *Presbyters* and  
*Deacons* kept these *introduced women*,  
 whereby horrible inconveniencies did  
 arise, for besides the snare and tempta-  
 tion of it, although they should keep  
 themselves innocent, yet they could  
 not avoid the suspicion and scandal  
 that would arise, and the danger of  
 drawing in others by their bad exam-  
 ple. For which reason *S. Basil* writes  
 to an old *Presbyter* in his Diocese, to  
 abstain from the company of a wo-  
 man with whom he was wont to co-  
 habit; not so much to avoid temptati-  
 on to incontinence (the man being  
 then seventy years of age) as that he  
 might not lay a stumbling stone, and  
 occasion of offence in his brothers way.  
 The same was universally forbidden by  
 the great Council of *Nice*, and no man  
 within the Clergy allowed to have  
 any woman near him, unless his *Mo-  
 ther*, his *Sister*, or his *Aunt*; or such only  
 of whom there could be no *suspicion*,

*Epist. ad.  
 Paregor.  
 Presbyt.  
 Epist. 198.  
 p. 216.*

*Can. 2. ubi  
 vid. Zonar.*

as we find it in the third *Canon* of that Part 2.  
 Council: in the antient version where-  
 of these *mulieres συνεσκαυτοι* are styl'd  
*extranea*, *strangers*; by which name  
 they are also call'd in a Law of the  
 Emperour *Honorius*, prohibiting any  
 Clergy-man whatsoever to keep com-  
 pany with these *strange-women*, limit-  
 ing their converse and cohabitation  
 within the very same relations, to  
 which they are restrain'd by the *Ni-  
 cene Canon*, which 'tis not to be doubt-  
 ed that Emperour had in his eye when  
 he made that *Constitution*. And be-  
 cause *Bishops* were the highest order in  
 the Church, therefore that their ho-  
 nour might be especially secured, care  
 was taken that no Bishop under pe-  
 nalty of being *deposed* should enter-  
 tain or cohabit with any woman what-  
 soever, either relation or stranger, that  
 so all pretence either of temptation  
 or scandal might be cut off. For the  
 same reason it was that they disallowed  
 all *clandestine* marriages, which were  
 not openly made in the face of the  
 Church, accounting them no better  
 than a state of *Adultery* or *Fornication*.  
 And as they were careful not to give  
 offence to others, so they were not  
 willing

*c. Th. lib.  
 16 Tit. 2.  
 de Episc. l.  
 44.*

*Synops.  
 Basil. lib. 3.  
 Tit. 1 c. 41.  
 p. 29.*

*Tertull. de  
 pudicit. c.  
 4. p. 557.*

Part 2. willing themselves to come within the shadow of a temptation, they stood at a distance from whatever was offensive either to their *eyes* or *ears*; their *ears* they stopt against all loose idle songs, all filthy and obscene discourses, their *eyes* they shut against all uncomely objects, all wanton and lascivious pictures, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* expressly tells us; not doing any thing that seemed but to carry an ill colour with it. *Nazianzen* tells us of his Sister *Gorgonia*, a vertuous woman whose example we have often quoted, that for modesty and sobriety she went beyond all other women; that she reconcil'd the two opposite states of humane life, *celibate* and *marriage*; the one more *sublime* and *divine*, but more *dangerous* and *troublesome*, the other more *humble*, but withal more *safe*; that she avoided the inconveniencies of each, and chose what was most excellent out of both, the *sublimity* of the one, and the *security* of the other; shewing that neither of these states in it self did wholly tie us up either to God or the World, nor yet wholly separate us from them, so that the one should be absolutely rejected, or the other absolutely

Admonit.  
ad Grac.  
p. 40. vid.  
Cons. 6. in  
Tull. Can.  
100. Orat.  
11. p. 180.

ly commended and embrac'd; but that Part 2. it is the *mind* that admirably presides both over Marriage and Virginity: And withal further adds concerning *Ibid. p. 184* her, that so great was her *bashfulness* and modesty, that when she lay under a most acute and dangerous distemper, yet she refused to have any *Physician* come near her, as blushing that any man should either *see* or *touch* her.

*Fourthly*, They valued their innocency and their honour above their *lives*, and therefore chose to undergo the greatest dangers, to *dye*, yea, to *kill* themselves rather than any violence should be offered to their chastity. As the fairest promises could not *tempt* them, so neither could the fiercest torments *affright* them into any unchast compliance. When *Maximinus* the *Emperour* governed in the *Eastern* parts, *Euseb. H. Eccl. lib 8. c. 14 p. 312* amongst other effects of his wild and brutish fury and extravagance, he fill'd all places where he came with Adulteries and ravishments, abusing women, and deflouring Virgins; which succeeded well enough (says the *Historian*) with all others, except only *Christians*, who generously despising death, made light of the rage and fury of

Part 2. of the Tyrant: the men underwent all sorts of punishments which cruelty could invent; the women bore up with a courage no less *manly* and unconquerable, and when any were drawn out to be abused, they rather submitted their lives to *death*, than their bodies to *dishonour*. Of these he tells us of one especially at *Alexandria*, a woman of great birth and fortunes, but much more famous for her Vertues, especially her modesty and chastity, which she stoutly defended, and preferred before her nobility or her riches, her excellent parts, or any accomplishments whatsoever. The Emperour had oft attempted her by all Arts of sollicitation, but all in vain; till at last, not being able to prevail, his affection somewhat attempering his fierceness and cruelty, he would not put her to death, which she was most ready to have undergone, but spoyl'd her of her estate, and then sent her into banishment; there being many hundreds of others at the same time, who not able to bear the violation of their chastity wherewith the Governours and Commanders threatned them, willingly subjected themselves to all kinds of

of racks and tortures, and the worst Part 2. *capital* punishments which their enemies could inflict upon them. Nay, when the case so happen'd that they were set upon, and all their resoluteness could not provoke the cruel kindness of their enemies to dispatch them, they would rather dispatch *themselves*, than fall into the rude hands of lust and wantonness. Thus did that famous *Woman* and her two Daughters, (mention'd by the same Author, whose names as *Chrysostome* in an *Oration* on purpose in their commendation tells *ib. c. 12 p. 305.* us, were *Domnina* the mother, *Bernice* *Hom. 5 l. de S. S. Domn. Ber. Prosd. tom. 1. p. 557.* and *Prosdice* the daughters) eminent as well for the outward beauty and *features* of their bodies, as for the inward *Vertues* of their minds, being sought for as a prey to lust under the *Dioclesian* persecution, they fled for it; but being found out by the Souldiers that were sent to search for them, and knowing there was no other way to escape, in their return they beg'd leave of the Souldiers, that for some private occasions they might step a little out of the rode; which being granted, fitting themselves for what they had beforehand agreed on, as well as the time

G 3

would

Part 2. would give them leave, they unanimously *threw* themselves into the river, and there perished in the *waters*. The like he relates of a *Noble Woman* at *Rome*, wife to the *Prefect* or Chief Governour of the City, (but a Christian) that *Maxentius* the Emperour being passionately enflamed with the love of her, sent Officers to fetch her, who breaking into the house, to the great terrour of her husband, would violently have seiz'd on her; of whom she beg'd only so much time, as that she might a little dress and adorn her self; under which pretence, retiring into her chamber, she caught up a sword, and by a fatal stroke left the Messengers nothing but a dismal spectacle of amazement and horror. These instances (both of them highly applauded by *Chrysostome* and *Eusebious*) I quote not to justify a mans violent laying hands upon himself, as either lawful or laudable; whether in some such cases persons might not be acted by more *divine* motions, extraordinary and *heroick* impulses (the case of *Sampson*, &c.) as *S. Augustine* inclines to believe, it is not very pertinent for me to enquire; it being enough to my purpose to observe, that

De Civ. D.  
lib. 1. c. 26.  
Cul. 75. ubi  
de hac ipsa  
re agit.

that they were great evidences how Part 2. highly they priz'd *Chastity* and *Integrity*, which they were willing to secure at so dear a rate.

And in those cases wherein life was not concern'd, they gave the greatest testimony how much they abhorred all uncleannets. None were ever more *Epiphani.* hearty enemies to *Idolatry*, and yet *Ori-* *Hares. 64.*  
*gen* at *Athens*, when put to this unhappy choice, either to *Sacrifice* or *defile* himself, chose rather to commit *idolatry* than fornication. Though even that too was rather his *Enemies* act than his *own*, they thrusting the frankincense into his hand, and haling him up to the *Altar*.

*Fifthly*, When ever any was found guilty of the least uncleanness, it was look'd upon and *bewail'd* as a very *heinous* sin, and a great *dishonour* to the Christian name: What is it that I hear *Ad Rogat.*  
(says *Cyprian*) how detestable should it *& Confess.*  
be to you, what with the greatest grief *Ep. 6. p. 15.*  
and affliction of my mind I have understood, that there are some amongst you, who have defil'd their *bodies*, the *temples of God*, even after they were *sanctified* by confession, and *cleans'd* by baptism, with filthy and infamous embraces,

Part 2. braces, promiscuously using the beds and lodgings of the women: When although they should be free from *actual* adultery, yet even in this 'twould be a *fault* of a mighty aggravation, that by their *scandalous* example others might be *seduced* into ruine. S. *Basil* writing to a *Monk*, who had been *overtaken* with this *fault*, elegantly bewailes the greatness of his sin, as a dishonour to the strictness of his former profession; a reproach to those lips which had *kiss'd* the mouths of so many *Saints*; to those hands which so many devout persons had *embrac'd* as pure and undefiled; to those knees before which so many servants of God had *fallen* down; as a being caught in the snare of a crafty *Devil*, a perfidious violation of his *promises*, a being become a *sport* and scorn to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, a confuting (what in him lay) that triumphant speech of *Christ*, that he had *overcome the world*, filling even to the place where he liv'd a cup of *infamy* and *reproach*. In the next *Epistle* he deals with the *Woman*, and treats her with the same elegant severity, though in both he so aggravates the case, as to excite them to repentance, and to a speedy

Ad Monac.  
lapsi rom. 3.  
p. 11.

Part 2. speedy recovery of themselves out of the snare of the Devil. But because good words and persuasions were not *cords* strong enough to restrain some mens irregular lusts and passions, they twisted with them the *Discipline* of the Church: And therefore,

*Sixthly*, They were wont to *punish* the breach of Chastity by inflicting severe *penalties* upon incontinent persons: Amongst all the sins that were most sharply punished in the ancient Church, *Adultery* was one of the chief; who-ever was convicted of it was immediately cast out of the Church, and dis-owned as a rotten member; This *Tertullian* tells us, first made *Marcion* turn *Heretick*, for being found guilty of lying with a *Virgin*, and for that thrown out of the Communion of the Church, he betook himself to one *Cerdon* a *Master Heretick*, and espoused his Doctrines and Opinions. The truth is, in those first times the punishment of *Adultery* was very great, *perpetual* penance all a mans life, and scarce being admitted into Communion at the very *hour of death*; till *Pope Zephyrinus* about the year *two hundred and sixteen*, considering the great inconveniencies of

Vid. Tert. de  
Pudicit. c.  
7. p. 560.  
de Hares.  
p. 120.



Part 2. of so much severity, persons hereby being oft driven into *despair*, and others discouraged from coming over to the Christian Faith, ordered that Penance in this case should be limited to a shorter time, which being ended, such persons might be received again into the bosom of the Church. This *Decree* gave great offence to the *African*

*Lib. de Pudicit. c. 1. p. 555.*

*Ad Antonian. Ep. 52.*

*p. 71, 72.*

Churches, most whereof stood up for the strictness of the *ancient* Discipline; *Tertullian* more especially inveighs against it with much bitterness and animosity, as a thing *unfit* in it self, and an *innovation* in the Church. The same, *Cyprian* also plainly intimates, though he himself was for the more *mild* Opinion. By the *Ancyran* Council, held

*Can. 20.*

*Anno three hundred and fifteen*, it was Decreed, That whoever was guilty of Adultery, should be punish'd with a *seven years* Penance before they were admitted to the Communion. By the

*Can. 7. p. 13*

Synod of *Illiberis*, if a man after having done his Penance for the first fault, fell afterwards into the same sin again, he was not to be taken into Communion, no *not* at the hour of death. The same punishment they inflicted upon

*Can. 12. p. 22.*

*Bawds* and such persons as for gain pro-

Part 2. prostituted the bodies of their *Children*, by selling them (or *themselves* rather, of whom their children were a *part*) to lust and ruine. *S. Basil* writing to *Amphilochius* rules for the conduct of Discipline, and the measures of repentance, sets Adultery at *fifteen years* Penance, Fornication at *seven*, and then to be admitted to the Holy Sacrament. His Brother *Gregory* Bishop of *Nyssa* treating about the same affairs, appoints Fornication to be punished with no less than *nine years* Penance and suspension from the Sacrament, and Adultery, and all other species of uncleanness with *double* that time; though allowing a liberty to the *Spiritual Guide* to contract this time, as the circumstances of the *Case* or *Person* might require. But both these last mention'd being but private Bishops, their *Canons* could be no further obligatory than to those particular *Diocesses*, that were under their charge. And indeed the censures of the Church in this case did much vary according to time and place, in some more *rigid* and severe, in others more *laxe* and favourable, though in all, such as did abundantly shew what hearty enemies they were to all filthiness

*Epist. Can. 58, 59. tom. 3. pag. 36.*

*Ep. Canon. ad Letoi. Can. 4. tom. 1. p. 951.*

Part 2. nefs and impurity whatsoever.

What has been hitherto said of the Modesty, the chaste and sober carriage of the Primitive Christians, will receive further light, if we consider how clearly they vindicated themselves from that *malicious* charge of *Incest* and *Adultery*, which the Heathens commonly charg'd upon them; so commonly, that we scarce find any of the ancient *Apologists* but takes notice of it and confutes it. The sum of the charge, as 'tis more formally drawn up by the

pag. 7, 8. Heathen in *M. Felix*, take thus: That the Christians knew one another by certain *privy* marks and signs, and were wont to be in *love* with, almost before they *knew* one another; that they exercised lust and filthiness under a pretence of *Religion*, promiscuously calling themselves *Brothers* and *Sisters*, that by the help of so *sacred* a name their common *Adulteries* might become *incestuous*; that upon a solemn day they meet together at a feast [ *he means their love-feasts* ] with their *Wives, Children, Sisters, Mothers*, persons of every *Age* and *Sex*, where after they have well eaten and drunk, and begun to be *warm* and merry, heated with

with the excess of wine, a piece of *meat* is thrown for the *dogs*, who being tied to the *Candlesticks*, begin to *leap* and *frisk* about till they have run away with, and put out the *lights*, and then nothing being left but darkness, the fit *cover* and shadow for impudence and villany, they *promiscuously* run amongst one another into filthy and incestuous embraces; and if they be not *all alike* guilty of incest, 'tis not the faults of their *will*, but the good fortune of their *chance*, seeing what *actually* happens to one, is *intentionally* the lot of all. This is the tale; which however absurd and incredible, yet strangely found *belief*, or at least was *pretended* to be believ'd amongst the enemies of *Christianity*. Now, though it be sufficiently refuted by what has been already said, yet we may observe the Christians of those times further pleading these *Four* things in their own vindication.

*First*, That if the *Charge* had been true, yet the *Heathens* had little reason to object it to the *Christians*, being *themselves* so notoriously guilty in this kind. For *Adultery* nothing more common amongst them, and for *Incest* 'twas

*Tert. Apol.*  
c. 9. p. 10. c.  
39. p. 31.  
*Mir. Fel.*  
p. 26.

110 Primitivè Christianity. Ch.5.

Part 2. 'twas a general indictment of whole Nations, the *Persians* usually lying with their own *Mothers*; the *Macedonians* and *Egyptians* marrying with their own *Sisters*, and this done even at *Athens* it self; their Histories full of them, their Plays and Tragedies which they frequented every day with great applause, represented them as *lawful* and *commendable*. *Socrates* himself, the great glory of the Heathen world, was condemned at *Athens* amongst other things for *Sodomy*, and the corrupting of Youth; and some of *Plato's* School have perished in the very act of Adultery. Nay their very *gods* themselves whom they worshipp'd and ador'd were highly guilty in this kind; they feign those things of *us* (says *Athenagoras*) which they themselves report of their own *gods*; whose lusts and wantonneffes 'tis no wonder if they style *Mysteries*; were they such hearty enemies to shameful and promiscuous mixtures, they must abhor their great god *Jupiter*, who begot children both of *Rhea* the *Mother*, and *Proserpina* the *Daughter*, and married with his own *Sister*. And who was (unless *Orpheus* their great *Poet* lies)

more

*Text. ib. c.*  
*46. p. 36.*

*Legat. pro*  
*Christian.*  
*p. 35.*

Ch.5. Primitivè Christianity.

111

more wicked and vile in this kind than Part 2. *Thyestes* himself? *Clemens Alexandrinus* tells them, that as they had ordered the matter, by the *Marriages*, begetting *Children*, *Adulteries*, and *Banquets* of their *gods*, (which they set out in their *Plays* and *Poems*) they had turn'd Heaven into a *Comick Scene*, and made the *Deity* a piece of *dramatick* sport, and by a satyrick wit had jested *Religion*, and whatever was most *Sacred* into *scorn* and *laughter*. Nothing more usual amongst them (as he there observes) than to hang their rooms with the *pictures* of their *gods* drawn in the most lascivious and *propudious* postures, engaged in the most filthy and dishonest actions, enough to shame intemperance it self. *These* (says he) are the *original patterns* of your *soft effeminacy*; *this* your *beastly* and *shameful divinity*; *these* the *doctrines* of your *gods*, co-partners with you in your *uncleanness* and *adultery*. And whereas they might pretend, that these stories of their *gods* were only the extravagant *inventions* of their *Poets*, who took a liberty to say any thing to gratifie the people; *Athanasius* answers, that hereby they shook the very *foundation* of their *gods*, having

*Admonit.*  
*ad Grac. p.*  
*39. 40. Vi-*  
*destis Jul.*  
*Firm. de*  
*Err. Prof.*  
*Relig. p. 8.*

*Orat. contr.*  
*Gent. p. 14.*  
*tom. I.*

Part 2. having no other authority for their *existence*, than what account their *Poets* gave them; so that if they feign'd their *actions*, they might with equal reason be supposed to feign their very *names* and *persons*, there being the same ground of belief for the one as for the other; and that there was as much reason to believe they spake truth in this, as in the relation of any other matters of fact, concerning *Achilles*, *Ulysses*, *Nestor*, *Hector*, or any of the rest; all depending upon the same warrant and authority. This propagated looseness and uncleanness to them under the notion and shadow of Religion; such as the *gods* are, such warrantably may be their *Worshippers*. Where-ever you are (says *Tertullian*) at home or abroad, or beyond the seas, *Lust* is your companion, which often stumbles upon *Incest*; whereas Chastity diligently and faithfully preserv'd keeps us from any such event, and we are as far from *Incest*, as we are from *Whoredom*, or any excess in a married state; yea, many prevent all possibility of this charge by containing themselves within perpetual Virginity. And yet though we are thus (says another *Apologist*) yet there

*Ibid. c. 9.  
p. 10.*

*Athenag. ut  
supr. p. 37.*

there want not those who object these Part 2. things to us, and as 'tis in the Proverb, *ἡ πόρνη τὴν ἀσθενοῦσαν*, the strumpet reproaches the honest woman; for though they merchandize for lust, and keep open shop for all manner of uncleanness, not abstaining from the violation and abuse of *Youth*, males with males committing that which is unseemly; though themselves are guilty of these villanies, which they report also of their *gods*, and do themselves boast of them as brave *achievements*, yet have they the face to accuse us of them. Adulterers and *Sodomites* as they are, they charge us who are either always continent, or never marry more than once; themselves in the mean while living like *fishes*, where the great ones subdue and swallow up the less. Such infamous filthinesses are done amongst you, which we do not care to hear, and may much less defend; you laying things to the charge of chaste and modest men, which we could not believe that there should be such things done in the world, were not you your selves instances of them. Thus consideration made *Justin Martyr* this freely and passionately bespeak the *Senate*; It were to be wished

H that

*M. Fæl. p.  
24. B.*

*Apol. 1. p.  
51.*

Part 2. that some body getting up into a *high* place, should with a *loud* voice cry out, *Be afraid, be afraid to charge those things, of which you your selves are openly guilty, upon the innocent and undeserving; to attribute what belongs only to your selves and to your gods, to those, with whom there is not so much as the shadow of any such thing to be found: Learn to be more wise and sober, and repent of such injustice.*

*Secondly,* That the Heathens themselves did tacitly *confess* Christians to be *Innocent* in this case, when their great care was how they might *debauch* them; 'twas a part of their severest punishment to be *prostituted*, and exposed to rudeness and violence; a penalty which they would never have inflicted upon them, had they really been such *lewd* profligate persons as their enemies endeavoured to represent them. This Plea *Tertullian* urges in the close of his *Apology*; Condemn, (says he) crucifie, and torment us; your *cruelty* and injustice is the evidence of our *Innocency*, and therefore God suffers it to come upon us: for while you chuse rather to condemn a *woman* that is a *Christian* to the *Stems* than to the

the *Lions*, you plainly confess that the violation of chastity is accounted by us a *heavier* penalty than any punishment or kind of death which you can inflict upon us.

An eminent instance hereof (though of the other sex) *S. Hieron* relates to this purpose: In the time of the *Decian* Persecution a young man a *Christian*, then in the flower and beauty of his age, whose constancy had been attempted by other means to no purpose, was at last set upon in this manner: He was carried into a pleasant *Garden*, and into a part of it beset with *Lillies* and *Roses*, hard by the banks of a *Crystal* river, whose soft *murmur*, together with the *musick* made by the leaves of the trees wav'd by the gentle motions of the wind, conspir'd to render it a place for *pleasure* and *delight*: Here upon a *bed* of *down* the young man was laid, and that he might not be able to help himself or shift his posture, was tied down with *silken* cords: the company withdrawing, a beautiful *strumpet* was sent in to him, who began to caresse him with kisses and embraces, treating him with all the arts of wantonness, not consistent with *modesty*.

Part 2. *sty* to name. How to relieve himself in this case the poor man knew not; but finding the temptation beginning to prevail, he presently bit off his *tongue* and *spit* it in her face as she attempted to kiss him, by the greatness of his pain extinguishing those *sensual* titillations which her wicked artifices began to kindle in him.

Apol. 2 p.  
61, 62.

*Thirdly*, they confidently assured them that amongst Christians it was not only unlawful to be *actually* unclean, but to *look after a woman with wanton and unchaste desires*; our Lord (says *Justin Martyr*) has told us that whosoever *looks after a woman to lust after her*, has *already committed adultery with her in his heart*; and that *if our right eye offend us we must pluck it out*; as therefore humane Laws condemn two Wives, so by the Laws of our *Master* they are sinners, who look upon a woman with *unfit* desires after her; for not only he that really commits adultery is rejected by him, but even he that has a *mind* to it; not only our *actions*, but our very *thoughts* being open unto God. So *Athenagoras*; So far are we from any promiscuous embraces, that we are not permitted

U<sup>r</sup> *supr.* p.  
36.

ted the freedom of an unchaste look; Part 2. for *whoever* (says our Lord) *looks after a woman to desire her, has play'd the adulterer with her in his heart*: we are not therefore allowed to use our eyes to any other purposes, than those for which God created them, *viz.* to be *lights* to the body: to abuse them to wantonness, is to be guilty of adultery, for as much as they know they were made for other ends, and cannot but be conscious to themselves of their own thoughts; and how is it possible for men under such *limitations* to be otherwise than chaste and sober? for we have not to deal with *humane* Laws, under which a man may be wicked, and yet escape; but our discipline was delivered by God himself; we have a Law which makes our *selves* the rule and measure of *righteousness* towards *others*; according therefore to the difference of age we account some as *Sons* and *Daughters*, others as *Brethren* and *Sisters*; the more aged we honour in the place of *Parents*; those therefore whom we account as *Sisters*, or as allied to us in any other relation, we reckon it a matter of great concernment that they

Part 2. they should be chaste and incorrupt.

*Fourthly*, They pleaded, that this objection would easily vanish, if they would but consider what a strange *change* and alteration was in this very case wrought upon persons at their first *conversion* to Christianity; immediately becoming quite of another spirit and temper from what they were before. We who before time (says *Justin Martyr*, speaking of the converting power of the *Christian* doctrine) did please our selves in *fornications* and uncleanness, do now solely embrace temperance and chastity; what an innumerable company could I name of those who have left their luxury and intemperance, and come over to this kind of life; for *Christ* came *not to call the chaste and righteous* [they needed it not] *but the wicked, the incontinent, and the unrighteous to repentance*. And in his other *Apology* he gives an instance of a woman, who having together with her husband lived a very *vicious* and debauched course of life, after her conversion to Christianity became strictly chaste and sober; and not content with this, she urged her husband also to do the like

*Apol. 2. p.*  
61, 62.

*Apol. 1 p.*  
41.

laying,

laying before him the doctrines of *Christianity*, and perswading him both by the rewards and punishments of another World: but he obstinately refusing, it begot a quarrel between them, which still ripen'd into a wider breach, till it became matter of publick cognizance, and was an occasion for *Justin Martyr* to write that excellent *Apology* for the Christians. Upon this account *Tertulian* justly condemns the madness of the Heathens, and their unreasonable prejudice against Christianity, that they would *hate* their nearest relations meerly for being *Christians*, though they saw how much they were every ways *bettered* by it in their lives and manners: the Father *dis-inheriting* his Son, of whom now he had *no* cause left to complain, but that he was a *Christian*: the Master *imprisoning* his servant, though now he had found him *useful* and necessary to him. But (what's more especially to the purpose) he tells us of some husbands he knew, who though before so infinitely *jealous* of their wives (and possibly not without reason) that a *Mouse* could not stir in the room but it must be a *Gallant* creeping to their bed, yet when upon

*Ad Nation.*  
*lib. 1. c. 4. p.*  
43.

H 4

their

Part 2. their turning Christians they became so eminently reserved, chaste and modest, that there was not the least foundation for suspicion, their *jealousy* was converted into *hatred*, and they vow'd they had rather their wives should be *strumpets* than *Christians*. So obstinately (*says he*) do men stand in their own *light*, and contend against those advantages which they might reap by Christianity. This Argument from the powerful and successful influence of the Christian Faith, *Origen* frequently makes use of; They must needs (*says he*) confess the excellency and *divinity* of Christs doctrine, who-ever do but look into the *lives* of those that adhere to it, comparing their former course of life with that which they now lead, and considering in what impurities, lusts and wickednesses every one of them wallowed before they embraced this doctrine; but since that they entertained it, how much more grave, moderate and constant are they become, insomuch that some of them out of a desire of a more *transcendent* purity, and that they may worship God with a chaster mind, deny themselves even the pleasures of a *lawful*

*Ad Cel. lib. 1. p. 21.*

*lawful* bed: The same he affirms else-  
where, that those whom the *Gentiles* Lib. 7. p. 365.  
scorn'd as the most rude and sottish persons, being once initiated into the faith and discipline of the holy *Jesus*, were so far from lasciviousness, filthiness, and all manner of uncleanness, that like *Priests* wholly devoted to God, they altogether abstain even from allowed embraces; that there was no need for them (as some of the best among the *Gentiles* have done) to use arts and *medicines* to keep them chaste; nor *Guardians* set over them to preserve their *Virginity*; the word of God being sufficient to expel and drive out all irregular appetites and desires. This also *Tertullian* observes *Apol. c. 46: p. 36.*  
as the incomparable excellency of the Christian Doctrine above that of the best Philosophers, that whenas *Democritus* was forc'd to put out his *eyes*, because not able to defend himself from the *charms* of beauty; a Christian could *look* upon a woman with chaste unseduced eyes, being at the same time inwardly *blind* as to any temptation from his lust; with such a mighty force did the Gospel come, and captivate mens hearts into the obedience of the truth.



Part 2. truth. Thence *Lactantius* makes this triumphphant challenge, where discoursing of the prevalency which the commands of God had upon the minds of men, as daily experience did demonstrate; Give me (says he) a man that's angry, furious, and passionate; and with a few words from God, I'll render him as meek and quiet as a Lamb: Give me one that's lustful, filthy and vicious, and you shall see him sober, chaste and continent: the same he instances in most other Vices. So great (says he) is the power of the divine wisdom, that being infused into the breast of a man, it will soon expel that folly which is the grand parent of all vice and wickedness.

The innocency of Christians standing thus clear from this wicked imputation, it may not be amiss before we conclude to enquire a little into the rise and original of this absurd and malicious charge. *Origen* fathers it upon the Jews, as if they had falsely and spitefully invented it (as they did other things) to disgrace and prejudice Christianity, and he tells us that in some measure it succeeded accordingly, keeping many at a distance from the Christian Religion; and that even in his time there

Contr. Cels.  
lib. 6. p.  
293, 294.

there were some who for this very Part 2. reason would have no discourse or commerce with a Christian. But though both Jew and Gentile had malice and spite enough against the Christians, yet I can hardly think that it was a purely invented falsehood, but that it had some ground of pretence, though ill applied; and so we shall find it had; for which we are to know that in the most early times of Christianity there were several sorts of Hereticks (who though they had their particular names, yet all call'd themselves Christians, accounting that hereby they grac'd and honour'd their party as *Epiphanius* tells *Heres. 29.* us) the followers of *Simon Magus*, *Mandander*, *Marcion*, *Marcus*, *Basilides*, &c. who all went under the general name of *Gnosticks*, and were under the pretence of Religion guilty of the most prodigious villanies, and particularly those we are speaking of. *Irenæus* reports of them that they gave up themselves to all filthiness and bestiality, not only privately corrupting the women whom they had inveigled into their Sect (as some of them returning after to the Church confessed with shame and sorrow) but openly and with bare face

Adv. Hæres. lib. 1. c. 1. p. 28. vid. etiam c. 9. p. 70. & c. 32. p. 132.

Part 2. face *marrying* the women whom they had *seduced* from their husbands; committing the most execrable wickednesses, and *laughing* at the pious and *Orthodox* Christians, whom the *fear of God* restrained from sin either in word or thought, as a company of *ignorant* and *silly* fellows; magnifying themselves, styling themselves *perfect* and *the Seeds of Election*: and much more in other places to the same purpose; where he gives account of the prophane and hellish Rites of their Assemblies. Of the *Carpocratians*, another gang of those *brutish* Hereticks, *Clemens Alexandrinus* relates the same both as to their doctrines and practices, reporting the matter almost in the very same circumstances wherein it is charg'd upon the Christians by the Heathen in *Min. Felix*, viz. that both men and women used to meet at *supper* (which they had in imitation of the true *Christian* *dynon* or *Love-feast*) where after they had loaded themselves with a plentiful meal, to prevent all shame, if they had any remain'd, they put out the *lights*, and then promiscuously mix'd in filthiness with one another, or else each sorting as they pleas'd. And of the

*Syromat.*  
*lib. 3. p.*  
430.

*Gnosticks*

*Gnosticks* *Epiphanius* tells us, that they Part 2: had their wives in *common*, and if any *Heret. 26.* stranger of their party came to them, *p. 42.* both men and women had this *mark* and *sign* to know one another by; stretching out their *hands* by way of salutation, they used to *tickle* each other in the *ball* of the hand, by which they were satisfied, that the stranger really was of their gang and party: Amongst their brethren the *Carpocra- Ib. Heret.* tians they were wont to *mark* their *27. p. 51.* Disciples and Profelytes unde the *right ear* with a brand, a slit, or a hole, that they might the more readily discern them; (This agrees exactly with the charge of the Heathens, that they *knew* one another at the *first sight* by *privy marks* and *signs*) and having thus own'd and received each other, they went to their luxurious feasts, and to those horrid brutishnesses that followed after.

Now this being the case with these abominable wretches, who yet had the face to call themselves *Christians*, it is no wonder if *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who were greedy of any occasion to bespatter and reproach *Christians*, and rather than not *find* an occasion would *make* one,

Part 2. one, charg'd it upon all Christians, either not knowing it to be otherwise, or if they did, not willing to *distinguish* between true and false. And that this was the true and only rise and ground of the charge, besides some intimations of it in *Justin Martyr*, we have it expressly asserted by *Eusebius*, as that which gave being to that absurd and impious Opinion, which spread so fast amongst the Heathens, of the Christians being guilty of promiscuous mixtures, to the great reproach and infamy of the *Christian* Name. I do not deny but this malicious report might receive strength and *encouragement* from the servants of some Christians, who being rack'd by the Heathens might confess what they put into their mouths, and this charge amongst the rest. This the same *Historian* relates out of the letters of the Churches in *France*; Certain Gentiles who were servants to some Christians, being apprehended, and having seen the exquisite torments which the Christians were put to, for fear of the like, did at the *instance* of the Souldiers who *urg'd* them to it, confess, that the Christians had amongst them *incestuous* mixtures, and suppers furnish'd

*Apol. 2. p.*  
*56. 70.*  
*Hist. Eccl.*  
*lib. 4. c. 7. p.*  
*120.*

*Lib. 5. c. 1.*  
*p. 156.*

furnish'd with *mans* flesh, laying such things to their charge as they held unlawful to *speak* or *think* of, or could *believe* were ever done by men: which being once divulg'd, they every where fell upon the Christians with the greatest rage and fierceness. So in the persecution under *Maximinus*, one of the Commanders that then resided at *Damascus*, laid hold of a few light considerable *women* in the Market, and threatening them with the Rack, forc'd the wretches publickly to confess that they had formerly been Christians, and that they knew all their *Villanies*, that in their Religious Meetings they committed the most beastly actions; and indeed, what ever else he would have them say that might disgrace Christianity. This *Confession* of theirs he caus'd to be entred into the publick *Records*, and then transmitted it to the *Emperour*, by whose Command it was immediately *Published* in all Cities and Places of the Empire. So industriously did the malice of Men and Devils bend all the *nerves* of their power and subtilty (though in vain) either wholly to *suppress*, or at least to *dishearten* and battle out the Christians: Which brings me

Part 2.

*Id. lib. 9. c.*  
*5. p. 350.*

Part 2. me to the consideration of another Virtue no less remarkable in the Christians of those times.

## CHAP. VI.

Of their readiness and constancy in professing their Religion.

*Their courage and undauntedness in professing the Truth though reproach'd and persecuted. Their open and resolute owning it to the face of their enemies, and in defiance of the greatest dangers. The story of Victorinus the Rhetorician converted by Simplician. The free and impartial Answers of Maris to Julian, of Basil to the Arrian Governour. Polycarp's refusing to fly when Officers were sent to apprehend him. His resolute carriage before the Proconsul. The like of Cyprian. No torments could make them deny Christ. Women unconquerable. The excellent instance of Blandina and others. Divers voluntarily offering themselves. Others offering to plead the cause of the Christians, though with the immediate*

*mediate hazard of their lives. This boldness and resolution noted as an argument of the excellency of their Religion, and the goodness of their cause above that of the best Philosophers. Aristoteles flying for fear of suffering for his Opinions. The cowardly silence of Iamblichus his Scholars. This resolution of theirs confessed by Heathens, Pliny, Apollo's Oracle in the case of Porphyrie's wife, Galen. The constancy of Christians to their Religion proverbial.*

**W**Hen our blessed Saviour sent out his Disciples to preach the Gospel, he acquainted them with the difficulties that were like to attend their message, but withall bad them arm themselves with **Constancy** and Resolution, and not to regard the scoffs and reproaches, the miseries and sufferings that might fall upon them, not to fear them that could only kill the body, but to make a free and bold **Confession** of his Name before the world, and chearfully to take up their Cross and follow him: and S. Paul, though himself then in chains at Rome, exhorts the Christians to stand fast in one spirit,

I with

Part 2. *with one mind striving together for the Faith of the Gospel, being in nothing terrified by their adversaries, it being given them on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; which made it very necessary for them to have their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.* And certainly, if ever true courage and greatness of mind appear'd in any persons in the world, it was in the *Christians* of those times, who with such a generous and unterrified mind defied dangers and torments, own'd and gloried in the profession of Christianity against all the threats, reproaches, and persecutions which the worst of their adversaries could make against them. We shall first see what account their *Apologists* give of it even before their enemies, and then how they made it good in their lives and actions.

*Apol. 2. p.*  
83.

*Justin Martyr* speaking of the successful propagation of the Gospel, immediately upon *Christ's* resurrection and ascension into Heaven, The Apostles of Christ (*says he*) going forth from *Jerusalem*, preach'd the powerful Word in every place; although it were *Capital* either to *preach* or to *profess* the

Name

Name of *Christ*, which yet we do every-where embrace and teach: which if you, as enemies, still go on to obstruct, the worst you can do, is but to *kill* us, whereby you will do us no great harm, but will purchase to your selves, and to all those that unjustly persecute us, and persist impenitent in their proceedings, the *vengeance* of eternal flames. And when *Trypho* the *Jew* had charg'd *Christianity* for an idle story, and the *Christians* for no better than *fools* to quit all the conveniences of this life upon the account of it; the *Martyr* answers, that this proceeded from his ignorance, and an implicit assent to the absurd and malicious insinuations of their *Rabbins*, who understood very little of the *Scriptures*; that would he but admit the true reasons of Christianity, he would quickly understand how far they were from being in an error, and how little reason they had to quit their profession, although men did sufficiently scorn and reproach them for it, and the powers of the world endeavour to force them to renounce and forsake it: notwithstanding all which, they chose rather to dye, and chearfully underwent it; being ful-

*Dial. c. viii.*  
*Tryph. P.*  
216.

*Ep. 3. c. 3.*  
D.

I 2

ly

Part 2. ly assur'd, that what God had *promised* through *Christ* he would infallibly make good to them. And discoursing afterwards of the same matter, As for us (*says he*) that have entertain'd the Religion of the Holy *Jesus*, your selves know very well, that there's none throughout the world that's able to *subdue* or *affright* us out of our profession; nothing being plainer, than that though our heads be expos'd to *Swords* and *Axes*, our bodies fastned to the *Cross*, though thrown to *wild beasts*, harrassed out with *chains*, *fire*, and all other instruments of *torment*, yet do we not start from our profession; nay, the more these things happen to us, the faster others flock over to the Name of *Jesus*, and become pious and devout followers of *Christ*; it being with us in this case, as with a *Vine*, which being *prun'd* and *trim'd*, and its luxurious excrescences par'd off, brings forth more fruitful and flourishing branches. How little he valued any danger in competition with the truth, he tells his adversary he might know by this, that he would not stifle and conceal it, although they should immediately tear him in pieces for it; and therefore when

Ibid p. 337

Ibid p. 349

when he saw his Countrymen the *Samaritans* seduc'd by the Impostures of *Simon Magus*, whom they held to be a *God above all Principality and Power*, he could not but by an address make his complaint to *Cæsar*, not regarding the hazards and troubles that might ensue upon it. *Tertullian* giving the Heathens an account of that *Christ* whom they worship'd, tells them they might well believe it to be true, for that no man might *lye* for his Religion, to *dissemble* in this case being to *deny*; a thing which could not be charg'd upon the *Christians*, who own'd and stood to it with their last drop of blood. *We speak it* (*says he*) *and we speak it openly, yea while you are tearing our flesh, and shedding our blood, we cry aloud, that we worship God through Christ*. So fully were they satisfied in the truth of their Religion, as to be ready rather a thousand times to *dye* than to *deny* it.

Nor were these merely big words with which the *Christians* vapour'd in the sight of their enemies, we shall find that they made them good by *acting* suitable to these professions and protestations. They did not then think

Appl. 21.  
p. 21.

Part 2. it enough to espouse the faith of *Christ*, unless they publicly testified it to the world; whereof this instance amongst others: *Victorinus* a *Rhetorician* of *Rome*, a man of so great note and fame, that he had obtain'd the honour of a publick *Statue*, but a zealous defender of *Paganism* and *Idolatry*, had read the Holy Scriptures, by which being convinc'd, he came to *Simplician*, and privately told him that he was a *Christian*; which the other refus'd to believe unless he saw him testifie it in the publick Church; to which *Victorinus* return'd with a little scorn, *What, are they then the walls that make a Christian?* This answer he as oft return'd as the other urg'd a publick confession, for he was not willing to disoblige his great friends, who he knew would fall foul upon him: till by reading and meditation he gathered courage, and fearing that *Christ* would deny him before the *Holy Angels*, if he should refuse to confess him before men, he became sensible of his fault, and was asham'd of his vanity and folly, and calling to *Simplician*, *Let us go (said he) into the Church, I will now become a Christian*; which when he had done, and had been

thorowly

August.  
Confes. lib.  
8. c. 2. tom.  
1. col. 136,  
137.

thorowly instructed in the Faith of Part 2. *Christ*, he offer'd himself to baptism; and being to make the accustomed confession of his Faith, the Ministers of the Church offer'd him the liberty of doing it in a more private way (as they were wont to do for those who were of a fearful and bashful temper) which he utterly refused, and openly made it before all the people; affirming it to be unreasonable that he should be ashamed to confess his hopes of Salvation before the people, who while he taught *Rhetorick* (wherein he hoped for no such reward) had publicly professed it every day. An action that begat great wonder in *Rome*, as it was no less matter of rejoicing to the Church. No dangers could then sway good men from doing of their duty. *Cyprian* highly commends *Cornelius* for taking the Bishoprick of *Rome* upon him in so dangerous a time; for the greatness of his mind, and the unshaken firmness of his Faith, and the undaunted manage-ry of his place, at a time when *Decius* the Tyrant threatn'd such heavy severities to the Ministers of Christianity, and would sooner endure a *Corrival* in the Empire, than a *Bishop* to sit at *Rome*.

Ad Anto-  
nian. Epist.  
52 p. 68.

Part 2. How freely, how impartially did they speak their minds, even to the face of their bitterest enemies? When *Maris* Bishop of *Chalcedon*, a man blind with age, met *Julian* the Emperour, he boldly charged him with his *Atheism* and *Apostasy* from the Christian Faith; *Julian* reproach'd him with his *blindness*, and told him his *Galilean God* would never cure him; to which the good old man presently answered, *I thank my God, who has taken away my sight, that I might not behold the face of one that has laps'd into so great impiety.*

*Socr. Hist.*  
*Eccl. lib. 3.*  
*c. 12 p. 183*

*Nazian.*  
*Orat. in*  
*Jul. 1. p. 75*

Were they at any time attempted by arts of *flattery* and enticement, the charms would not take place upon them. So when *Julian* both by himself and the Officers of his Army set upon the Souldiers, and by fair promises of preferments and rewards sought to fetch them off from Christianity; though he prevail'd upon some few weak and instable minds, yet the far greatest part stood off; yea, by many even of the *meanest* and most inconsiderable quality his *temptations* were as resolutely beaten back, as the *blow* of an Engine is by a wall of *marble*. Nor were they any more shaken by storms and

and threatenings. When *Modestus* the Part 2. Governour under *Valens* the *Arrian* *Id. in laud. Basil. Orat.* Emperour could not by any means *20. p. 349, 350.* bring over *S. Basil* to the party, he threatned him with severity; Dost thou not fear this power that I have? Why should I fear said *Basil*, what canst thou do, or what can I suffer? the other answered, the loss of thy *Estate*, *Banishment*, *Torment*, and *Death*; but threaten us with something else if thou canst (said *Basil*) for none of these things can reach us; confiscation of *Estate* cannot hurt him, that has nothing to lose, unless thou wantest these *tatter'd* and thread-bare garments, and a few *Books* wherein all my estate lies; nor can I be properly *banished*, who am not tied to any *place*, where-ever I am 'twill be my Country, *the whole earth is Gods*, in which I am but a *Pilgrim* and a stranger: I fear no *torments*, my body not being able to hold out beyond the first stroke; and for *death*, 'twill be a *kindness* to me, for 'twill but so much the *sooner* send me unto *God*, for whose sake I live, and am indeed in a great measure already dead, towards which I have been a long time hastning. And there's no reason to wonder at this



Part 2. this *freedom* of speech ; in other things we are meek and yielding ; but when the *Cause* of God and Religion is concerned , over-looking all other things, we direct our thoughts only unto him ; and then *fire* and *sword*, *wild beasts* and *engines* to tear off our flesh, are so far from being a *terror*, that they are rather a *pleasure* and recreation to us : Reproach and threaten, and use your power to the utmost, yet let the Emperour *know*, that you shall never be able to make us assent to your *wicked* Doctrine, no, though you should threaten ten thousand times worse than all this. The Governour was strangely surpriz'd with the spirit and resolution of the man, and went and told the Emperour, *that one poor Bishop was too hard for them all*. And indeed so big were their spirits with a desire to assert and propagate their Religion, that they would not hide their heads to decline the greatest dangers. When the Officers were sent to apprehend S. Polycarp, and had with great industry and cruelty found out the place where he was, though he had timely notice to have escaped by going into another house, yet he refus'd, saying,

*Ens. Hist.*  
*Eccl. lib. 4.*  
*6. 15. p. 130.*

ing, *the will of the Lord be done* ; and Part 2. coming down out of his Chamber, saluted the Officers with a chearful and a pleasant countenance : as they were carrying him back, two persons of eminency and authority met him in the way, took him up into their Chariot, labour'd by all means to perswade him to *do sacrifice* ; which when he absolutely refus'd after all their importunities, they turn'd their *kindness* into *reproaches*, and tumbled him with so much violence out of the Chariot, that he was sorely *bruised* with the fall ; but nothing daunted, as if he had received no harm, he chearfully went on his way, a *voice* being heard as he went along, as it were from Heaven, *Polycarp, be strong, and quit thy self like a man*. When he came before the Tribunal, the *Proconsul* asked him whether he was *Polycarp*, which he presently confessed ; then he attempted by all arts of perswasion to urge him to *deny Christ*, or to do but *something* that might look like it, but all in vain ; *These fourscore and six years* (says he) *have I served Christ, and he never did me any harm, and how then can I blaspheme my Master and my Saviour ?* Being

Part 2. ing urg'd to swear by the Emperours *Genius*, he replyed, Forasmuch as thou pressest me to do this, pretending thou knowest not who I am, know, *I am a Christian*; then the *Proconsul* told him he would throw him to the *wild beasts*, unless he alter'd his Opinion: Call for them (answered *Polycarp*) for we have no mind to change from *better to worse*; as counting that change only to be honest and laudable, which is from *Vice to Vertue*: But if thou makest so light of wild beasts (added the *Proconsul*) I'll have a *fire* that shall tame thee; to which the good old man return'd, You threaten, Sir, a *fire* that will burn for an *hour*, and presently be *extinguish'd*; but know not that there is a fire of *eternal* damnation in the judgement to come, reserv'd for the punishment of all wicked men: But why delay you? execute what ever you have a mind to. This and much more to the same purpose he discoursed of, to the great admiration of the *Proconsul*; being so far from being terrified with what was said to him, that he was filled with joy and chearfulness, and a certain grace and loveliness over-spread his face.

So

So likewise when *Cyprian* was brought before the *Proconsul*; Thou art (*said he*) *Thascius Cyprian*, who hast been a *ringleader* to men of a wicked mind; the Emperours command thee to do *sacrifice*, and therefore consult thy welfare: To which he answered, *I am Cyprian, I am a Christian, and I cannot sacrifice to your gods; do therefore what you are commanded; as for me, in so just a cause there needs no consultation*; and when the sentence was pronounced against him, he cried out, *I heartily thank Almighty God, who is pleased to free me from the chains of this earthly carcass*. Had torments and the very extremities of cruelty been able to *sink* their Courage, it had soon been trodden under foot; but it was triumphant in the midst of torments, and lift up its head *higher*, the *greater* the loads that were layd upon it; whereof there are instances enough in the *Histories* of the Church; nay in this triumph even the *weaker* Sex bore no inconsiderable part. *Eusebins* tells us (among others that suffered in the French persecution under *M. Aurelius*) of one *Blandina*, a good woman, but of whom the Church was afraid how she

*Hist. Eccl.*  
*lib. 5. c. 1. p.*  
157.

Part 2. she would hold out to make a resolute confession, by reason of the weakness of her body, and the tenderness of her education, that when she came to't, she bore up with such invincible magnanimity, that her tormentors though they took their turns from morning to night, and plied her with all kinds of racks and tortures, were yet forced to *give over*, and confess themselves *overcome*; and wondring that a body so broken and mangled should yet be able to draw its breath. But this noble *Athleta* gain'd strength by suffering, she eased and refreshed her self, and mitigated the sense of present pain by repeating these words, *I am a Christian*; and, *No evil is done by us*. Nor did they only generously bear these things for the sake of their Religion, when they were layd upon them, but many times freely offered themselves, confessing themselves to be *Christians* when they knew that their confession would cost their lives. So did those noble *Martyrs* whom *Eusebius* saw at *Thebais*, multitudes having been executed every day with all imaginable cruelties; sentence was no sooner pass'd against one party of them,

*Lib. 8 c. 9.  
p. 301.*

them, but others presented themselves Part 2. before the *Tribunal*, and confessed that they were *Christians*, receiving the fatal sentence with all possible expressions of chearfulness and rejoicing: The same which he also reports of six young men that suffered in *Palestine*, spontaneously addressing themselves to the Governour of the *Province*, owning that they were Christians, and ready to undergo the severest punishments. In the *Acts* of *S. Cyprian's* passion we are told, that the President having caus'd a mighty furnace to be filled with *burning lime*, and fire with heaps of *frankincense* round about the brim of it, gave the Christians this choice, either to *burn* the frankincense in sacrifice to *Jupiter*, or to be *thrown* into the furnace: Whereupon three hundred men being arm'd with an unconquerable faith, and confessing *Christ* to be the *Son of God*, leaped into the midst of the fiery furnace, with whose fumes and vapours they were immediately suffocated and swallowed up.

*De Martyr. Palest.  
c. 3. p. 321.*

*Ubi sup. p.  
16.*

There wanted not some who in the hottest persecutions durst venture to undertake the cause of *Christians*, and to

Part 2. to plead it before the face of their bitterest enemies; thus did *Vettius Epagathus* a man full of zeal and piety, who seeing his fellow-Christians unjustly dragged before the Judgment-seat, required leave of the *President* that he might plead his brethrens cause, and openly shew that they were not guilty of the least wickedness and impiety: but not daring to grant him so reasonable a request, the Judge took the advantage of asking him whether he was a *Christian*, which he publicly owning, was adjudged to the same Martyrdom with the rest. Of *Origen* we read that though then but eighteen years of age, yet he was wont not only to wait upon the *Martyrs* in prison, but to attend upon them at their tryals, and the times of their execution, kissing and embracing them, and boldly preaching and professing the faith of *Christ*, insomuch that had he not been many times miraculously preserved, the *Gentiles* had pelted him to death with stones, for they mortally hated him for his industrious and undaunted propagation of the Faith: Nay, when but a Boy, and his Father *Leontius* was seized upon, he wrote to his

*Ensch. lib. c. 5. 1. p. 155.*

*Ib. lib. 6. c. 3. p. 204.*

*Ib. cap. 2. p. 202.*

his Father, most earnestly pressing him to persevere unto Martyrdom, and not to concern himself what might become of his wife and children, nor for their sakes to decline that excellent cause he was engaged in.

By this free and chearful undergoing the greatest miseries rather than deny or prejudice their Religion, Christians evidently demonstrated the goodness of their Principles, and shewed they were no such persons as their enemies commonly look'd upon them; that a Christian (as *Ignatius* observes) is not the child of fancy and persuasion, but of true gallantry and greatness of spirit, having so much hatred of the World to grapple and contend with. Those who are Malefactors (as *Tertullian* argues) desire to be concealed, and shun to appear; being apprehended, they tremble; being accused, they deny; being racked do not easily nor always confess the truth; however being condemn'd, they are sad, search into and censure themselves, are unwilling to acknowledge their wickednesses to be their own, and accordingly impute them either to their fate or Stars. But what is there like this

*Epist. ad Rom. an. p. 57.*

*Apol. c. 1. p. 2.*

Part 2. to be found in *Christians*? Amongst them no man is *asham'd*, none *repents* him of being a *Christian*, unless it be that he was no *sooner* so; if marked out, he *glories*; if accused, he stands not to *defend* himself; being interrogated, he confesses of his own accord; being condemn'd, he *gives thanks*: what evil then can there be in this, which is so far from having any shadow of *evil*, any *fear*, *shame*, *tergiversation*, *repentance*, *deplorableness* to attend it? What evil can that be, of which he that is guilty *rejoices*? of which to be accused, is their *vote* and *desire*; and for which to be punished is their *happiness* and *felicity*? This likewise *Arnobius* lays down as a grand evidence of the divinity of the *Christian* faith, that in so short a time it had conquered so much of the world, subdued men of the greatest parts and learning, made them willing to quit their belov'd *opinions*, to forfeit their *estates*, to part with their *ease* and *pleasures*, and to submit to torments rather than violate the faith of *Christ*, or start from the *station* they had entred upon. By this excellent temper and carriage they admirably triumphed over the best men

*Adv. gent.*  
*lib. 2. p. 21.*

men amongst the *Gentiles*; none of Part 2. whom durst engage so deep for the defence of their *dearest* sentiments as the *Christians* did for theirs; witness *Plato* who set up the *Academy*, and brought in an *obscure* and *ambiguous* way of delivering his opinions, lest by speaking out he should fall under the sentence and the fate of *Socrates*. Thus *Origen* puts *Celsus* in mind of *Aristotle*, who *Cont. Cels. lib. 1. p. 51.* understanding that the *Athenians* intended to call him to account for some of his (as they thought them) *un-orthodox* opinions, immediately remov'd his School, saying to his Friends, *Let's be gone from Athens, lest we give them an occasion of being guilty of a second wickedness, like to that which they committed against Socrates, and lest they again offend against the Majesty of Philosophy*: it being alas! not *kindness* to the *Athenians*, but *cowardise* and fear of punishment made him so hastily pack up and be gon, and leave his opinions behind him to shift for themselves as well as they could. Nay, *Eunapius* himself *In vit. Alc. desii. p. 33.* confesses that in the time of *Constantine*, when *Paganism* began to go down the wind, and *Christianity* to be advanced and honoured, their best *Philosophers*,

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Part 2. Iosophers, the great Scholars of *Iamblichus* took sanctuary at a mysterious *secrecy*, and wisely kept their *dogmata* and opinions to themselves, sealed up under a profound and religious silence. No, they were the Christians only, the very *meanest* of whom durst stand by and defend *naked* truth in the face of danger and death it self; this being (as *Eusebius* notes) one of the most wonderful things in *Christian* Religion, that they who embrace it, are not only ready to profess it in words, but entertain it with such a mighty affection and sincerity of soul, as willingly to prefer the bearing testimony to it even before life it self. And indeed this piece of right is done them by *Pliny* himself, where speaking of some, who having been accused for *Christians*, to shew how far they were from it, readily *blasphemed Christ* and *sacrificed* to the gods; he adds, *none of which it's said that they who are truly Christians can by any means be compelled to do.* Nay thus much is confessed by the *Oracle* it self, for when *Porphyry* the great Philosopher, and acute enemy of the Christians, enquired of *Apollo's Oracle*, what *god* he should make his address to for the

Hist. lib. 1.  
63 p. 14.

Epist. 37.  
lib. 10.

# Ch. 7. Primitive Christianity. 149

the recovery of his *wife* back from Part 2. *Christianity*, the *Oracle* returned him this Answer, (as himself reported it in his Book *ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας*, not *δεολογία φιλοσοφίας*, as 'tis corruptly in S. *Augustin*; a Book frequently cited both by *Eusebius* and *Theodoret*; where by the way in the *Latin* Version of *Theodoret* 'tis by a strange mistake rendered *de Electorum Philosophia*, as if it had been *ἐκλογῶν*: in this Book concerning the *Philosophy* draw from *Oracles*, he tells us he received this answer) *that he might as well, and to better purpose attempt to write upon the surface of the water, or to fly like a bird in the air, than to reduce his wife from those wicked sentiments she had taken in.* And this was so common and notorious that it became in a manner *Proverbial*; whence that of *Galen*, when he would express how pertinaciously the Philosophers adhered to those sentiments they had once drunk in, and how very hard and almost impossible it was to convince them, *Sooner, says he, may a man undeceive a Jew or a Christian, and make them renounce the doctrines of Moses or of Christ, than Philosophers and Physicians that*

Apud August. de Civ. Dei lib. 19. c. 23. col. 1181. de prapap. Evang. lib. 4. de Curand. Grac. Affect.

Θεωρεῖν τὸ ἀντί τῶν ἀπὸ Μουσῆ καὶ Χριστοῦ μαθητῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς τὴν ἀποστολὴν τῶν φιλοσόφων. Galen. ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ ἀσχυρὰν εἶναι τὴν πίστιν, ἢ τὴν ἀσχυρὰν τὴν πίστιν. Tom. 3.

Part 2. are once addicted to their several Sects.

## CHAP. VII.

### Of their Exemplary Patience under Sufferings.

*Christianity likely to engage its followers in suffering, and why. Continual Edicts put forth against Christians. The form of those Imperial orders exemplified out of the Acts of the Martyrs. The fierce opposition of the Roman Emperours, and their probable hopes of having destroyed Christianity evidenced from several Inscriptions to that purpose found in Spain. The greatness of the torments Christians endured; some of the ordinary kinds of them describ'd. The Cross; the pain and ignominy of it; Persons crucified with their heads downwards. The Rack, what. Catasta; ad Pulpitum post Catastam. Ungulæ; one of these kept and ador'd as a Relique at Rome. The Wheel. Burning. Throwing to wild beasts. Being condemned*

*condemned to Mines; their treatment there and the case of such persons. Some of the extraordinary ways of punishment used towards Christians. Torn asunder by branches of trees: burnt in pitch'd coats: boyl'd in pots of oyl or lead, &c. Their carriage under these sufferings sedate and calm; meek and patient. Their refusing to make use of opportunities to avoid suffering. Whether they might fly and withdraw in times of persecution: Allow'd and practis'd in some cases; two instanc'd in. Where persons were of more than ordinary use and eminency. Where they were weak for the present, and not like to hold out. Prov'd by particular instances. Their chearful offering themselves to the rage and fury of their enemies, confessed by the relation of their Judges and bitterest Adversaries, Tiberianus, Arrius Antoninus, Lucian. The earnest desire of Martyrdom in Ignatius, Laurentius, Origen and others. When unjustly condemned, their Judges thanked for condemning them. Their glorying in suffering and being crucified. Babylas the Martyr's chains buried with him. No signs of*

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Part 2.

*an impatient mind under their bitterest torments. An account of their chearful suffering out of Cyprian. Their patience wondred at by their enemies. Their grand support under suffering; the hopes and assurance of a reward in Heaven. The case of the forty Martyrs in S. Basil. Psalms sung at the Funeral of Christians, and Lights carried before the Corps, and why. Christianity vastly increased by the patience and constancy of Christians. Justin Martyr's account of his conversion by this means. Julian generally refused to put Christians to death, and why. The testimonies of several Heathens concerning the Christians courage and patience under sufferings.*

**T**hat the Christian Religion at its first appearing in the World was likely to engage its followers in miseries and sufferings, could not be unknown to any that considered the nature of its doctrine, and the tendency of its design. The severity of its precepts so directly opposite to the corrupt and vicious inclinations of men; the purity of its worship so flatly con-

trary

Part 2.

trary to the loose and obscene rites and solemnities of the Heathens; its absolute *inconsistency* with those Religions which had obtained for so many Ages, which then had such firm *possessions* of the minds of men, and all the powers and policies of the world to secure and back them, could not prophesie to it any kind or welcome entertainment. This *Seet* (for so they call'd it) was every where not only *spoken*, but *fought against*; for since men have a natural veneration for *Antiquity*, and especially in matters of Religion, they thought themselves concerned to defend that way, that had been convey'd to them from their *Ancestours*, and to set themselves with might and main against whatever might oppose it: especially the *great ones* of those times and the *Roman Emperours* made it their master-design to oppress and stifle this *infant Religion*, and to banish it out of the World. Hence those Imperial *orders* that were dayly sent abroad into all parts of the Empire, to command and empower their Governours to ruine and destroy the *Christians*; of which that we may the better apprehend the *form* of them, it may not be amiss to set down



Part 2. down one or two of them out of the acts of the *Martyrs*. This following was agreed upon both by the *Emperours* and the whole *Senate of Rome*. Decius and Valerian *Emperours*, *Triumphers*, *Conquerours*, *August*, *Pious*, together with the whole *Senate*, have by common consent decreed thus. Whereas we have received the gifts and blessings of the gods, by whom we enjoy victory over our enemies, as also temperate seasons and fruits in great plenty and abundance; since we have found them our great benefactors, and to supply us with those things that are universally beneficial to all: We therefore unanimously decree, that all orders of men, as well children as servants, souldiers as private persons shall offer sacrifices to the gods, doing reverence and supplication to them. And if any shall dare to violate our divine order thus unanimously agreed upon, we command, that he be cast into prison, and afterwards exposed to several kinds of torments; if by this means he be reclaimed, he may expect no mean honours from us. But if he shall persist continuacious, after many tortures let him be beheaded, or thrown into the sea, or cast out to be devoured by dogs and birds of prey.

Metra-  
phrast. in  
Martyr.  
S. Mercur.  
apud Sur.  
ad 24. No-  
vemb. Tom.  
6.

prey. But especially if there be any found Part 2.  
of the Religion of the Christians. As  
for those that obey our Decrees, they shall  
receive great honours and rewards from  
us. So happily fare ye well.

To this we may add that short Re-  
script of Valerian. Valerian the Empe-  
rour to the Ministers and Governours of  
Provinces. We understand that the pre-  
cepts of the Laws are violated by those  
who in these days call themselves Christi-  
ans. Wherefore we will, that apprehend-  
ing them, unless they sacrifice to our gods,  
you expose them to divers kinds of pu-  
nishments; that so both justice may have  
place without delay, and vengeance in  
cutting off impieties having attain'd its  
end, may proceed no further. This  
course they prosecuted with so much  
vigour and fierceness, that some of  
them boasted, that they had absolute-  
ly effected their design. Witness those  
Trophies and Triumphal Arches that  
were every where erected to perpetuate  
the memory of their Conquest over  
Christianity: whereof these two In-  
scriptions found at Clunia in Spain are  
a sufficient evidence.

48. Sym-  
phor. apud  
Sur. ad 22.  
Aug. Tom.  
4.

DIOCLE-

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Part 2.

Gruter. In-  
script. p.  
280. Num.  
3.

DIOCLETIANUS. JOVIUS. ET.  
MAXIMIAN. HERCULEUS.

CAES. AUGG.

AMPLIFICATO. PER. ORIEN-  
TEM. ET. OCCIDENTEM,  
IMP. ROM.

ET

NOMINE. CHRISTIANORUM.  
DELETO, QUI. REMP. EVER-  
TEBANT.

*The other,*

*Ibid. num.*  
4.

DIOCLETIAN. CAES.  
AUG. GALERIO. IN. ORI-  
ENTE. ADOPT. SUPERS-  
TITIONE. CHRIST--  
UBIQ. DELETA. ET. CUL-  
TU. DEOR. PROPAGATO.

The meaning of both which is to shew, that *Diocletian* and his Colleague *Maximianus* had every were extinguished the wicked *Superstition* of *Christ*, so pernicious to the Commonwealth, and had restor'd *Paganism* and the worship of the gods. But long before them we find *Nero* (the first Emperour that raised persecution against the *Christians*, as *Tertullian* notes) so active

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active in the business, as to glory (or Part 2. some flatterers in his behalf) that he had done the work. Witness an *Inscription* found also in *Spain*.

NERONI. CL. CAIS.  
AUG. PONT. MAX.

*Ibid. Pag.*  
238. num.  
9.

OB. PROVINC. LATRONIB.  
ET. HIS. QUI. NOVAM.  
GENERI. HUM. SUPER-  
STITION. INCULCAB.

PURGATAM.

.....  
.....

This *Inscription* was set up in memory of his having purged the Country of Robbers, and such as had introduc'd and obtruded a new *Superstition* upon mankind. The *Christians* it's true are not particularly nam'd in it (probably the *Gentiles* so much detested the very name of *Christian*, that especially in publick Monuments they would not mention it) yet can it be meant of no other. For besides that this Character of *Inculcating* their *Superstition* admirably agrees to *Christians*, who sought by

Part 2. by all means to *instill* their Principles into the minds of men; besides that *superstition* was the common *Title* by which the Gentiles were wont to denote Christianity; besides this, there was not (as *Baronius* observes) any other *New Religion* at that time, or long before or after, that appeared in the world; to be sure none that could be the object of *Nero's* persecution. And how he entertain'd this, *Tertullian* sufficiently intimates, bidding them search their own *Records*, and they would find. And from this very *Inscription* alone it's evident, they thought, that (at least in that part of the world) they had wholly *extirpated* and rooted it out. By all which we may guess, what hot service the *Christians* had on't under those Primitive Persecutions. Indeed their sufferings were beyond all imagination great, which yet did but so much the more exercise and advance their *Patience*, the bitterness of their sufferings making their patience more eminent and illustrious. Of which that we may take the truer measures, 'twill be necessary to consider these two things, the *greatness* of those *torments* and sufferings which the *Christians* generally

Ad Ann.  
Chr. 69.

Apol. c. 5.  
p. 6.

generally underwent; and then the *man-* Part 2.  
*ner* of their carriage under them.

For the First, the greatness of those *torments* and sufferings which they underwent, they were as bad as the wit and malice of either *Men* or *Devils* could invent; in the consideration whereof we shall first take a view of those punishments which were more standing and *ordinary*, familiarly used amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and then of such as were *extraordinarily* made use of towards the *Christians*: Amongst their ordinary methods of Execution, these six were most eminent, the *Cross*, the *Rack*, the *Wheel*, *Burning*, *wild Beasts*, condemning to *Mines*.

I. The *Cross* deserves the first place in our account, not only as having been one of the most *ancient* and *universal* ways of punishment amongst the *Gentiles*, and from them brought in amongst the *Jews*, but as being the instrument by which our *Blessed Saviour* himself was put to death. Omitting the various and different forms and kinds of it, which were all used towards the Primitive *Christians*, I intend here only that that was most common, a straight piece

Part 2. piece of wood fixed in the ground, having a transverse beam fastned near the top of it, not unlike the letter T, though probably it had also a piece of wood arising above the top of it, and there were *two things* in this way of punishment, which rendred it very severe, the *pain* and *ignominy* of it. Painful it must needs be, because the party suffering was fastned to it with *nayles* driven through his *hands* and *feet*, which being the parts where the *nerves* and *sinews* terminate and meet together, must needs be most acutely sensible of wounds and violence: and because they were pierced only in these parts so far distant from the *Vitals*, this made their death very *lingring* and tedious, doubled and trebled every pain upon them: Insomuch that some out of a *generous* compassion have caused malefactors first to be *strangled* before they were *crucified*, as *Julius Caesar* did towards the *Pirates* whom he had sworn to execute upon the Cross. But no such favour was shewed to *Christians*; they were suffered to remain in the midst of all those exquisite pangs, till meer hunger starved them, or the mercy of wild beasts

*Sueton. in  
vit. Caf. c.  
74. p. 76.*

*Vid. Euseb.  
H. Eccl. lib.  
8 c. 8. p.  
300.*

or

or birds of prey dispatch'd them. Thus Part 2. *S. Andrew* the Apostle continued *two* <sup>*Martyrol. Rom. ad diem 30.*</sup> whole days upon the Cross, teaching the people all the while; *Timothens* <sup>*Novembr. p. 736.*</sup> and his wife *Maura* after many other <sup>*Ib. ad diem 3. Maii. p. 272.*</sup> torments hung upon the Cross *nine* days together before they compleated their Martyrdom. Nor was the *shame* of this way of suffering less than the pain of it, crucifixion being the *peculiar* punishment of *Slaves*, *Traytors*, and the vilest Malefactors, insomuch, that for a *Freemen* to dye thus, was accounted the highest accent of ignominy and reproach; therefore the *Roman Historian* calls it *servile supplicium*, a punishment proper to slaves. Sometimes they were crucified with their heads *downwards*; thus *S. Peter* is said to have been crucified; thus those *Egyptian* Martyrs, who hung in this posture, till they were starv'd out of the world. But this punishment of the Cross soon after the world was become Christian, *Constantine* took away out of reverence to our *Saviour*, not being willing that that should be the *punishment* of the vilest malefactors, which had been the *Instrument* whereupon the Son of God had purchased *Salvation* for mankind.

*Val. Gallie.  
in Avid.  
Caf. c. 4. p.  
248.  
Vid. Lact.  
de ver. sap.  
c. 26. p. 436*

*Euseb. lib.  
3 c. 1. et lib.  
8. ubi supr.*

*Sozom. lib.  
1. c. 8. p.  
412.*

L

II. The

Part 2. II. The **Rack**, called in Latin *Equuleus*, either from the scituation of the offenders body upon the Engin, resembling a man on *horseback*, or rather from the *horsing* or holding of him up to it by ropes and screws. The first design of it was to torment the guilty, or the suspected person to make him *confess* the truth; what the particular form of it was is not agreed amongst learned men; but this we may probably conceive, that it was an Engine fram'd of several pieces of timber joyned together, upon the top whereof upon a long *board* the suffering person being laid along upon his back and fastned to it by his hands and feet, the Engine was so contriv'd with screws and pulleys, that all his members were *distended* with the utmost violence, even to a *luxation* of all the parts, and this more or less according to the tormentors pleasures. Sometimes they were hung by the hands and feet *under* the top-board of the Engine, and tormented in that posture; This Rack was a punishment which the Christians were very frequently put to. Much of the same nature was that which they call'd the *Catasta*, being a piece of wood raised

*Cicer. pro  
Deiotar. p.  
579. tom.  
2.  
Vid. Gallon  
de cruciat.  
martyr. c. 3.*

fed up like a little scaffold, upon which Part 2. Christians were set, that their torments might be more conspicuous; thence that proverb in *Cyprian, ad Pulpitum* *Epist. 33. p. post Catastam venire*, speaking of *An-47. relins* a Confessor, who having been publicly tormented upon this Engine was after. ordain'd a *Reader* in the Church, and promoted to read the Scriptures out of the *Pulpit*, as he had lately confessed Christ upon the *Scaffold*: In this, as in that of the Rack, there were certain additional torments made by instruments called *Ungulae*, which were a kind of iron *pinfers*, made with sharp teeth, with which the flesh was by piece-meal pull'd and torn off their backs.

In the time of Pope *Paul* the third, one of these *Ungulae*, as the authour of the *Roma Subterranea* tells us; was amongst other things found in the *Vatican Cemetery* amongst the monuments of the *Martyrs*, and laid up amongst the other *Reliques* of that Church as an inestimable *treasure*, and a worthy object of *Religious* worship; being there kept to be seen and *ador'd* by all Christian people. And another of their writers being about to describe it, tells

*Hec ungula  
in sacrarum  
Sanctuariorum  
reliquiarum  
ejusdem Basili-  
cae, religiosi cultus,  
tanquam rei  
omni pretio-  
sior auro, dis-  
tignissime as-  
servatur; &  
Christianorum  
populo vi-  
denda ac ve-  
neranda pro-  
ponitur.  
Rom. subter.  
lib. 2. c. 4.  
num. 86. pag.  
149.  
Gallon. ib. c.  
5. p. 185.*

Part 2. us that though altogether *unworthy* of such a *favour*, yet he was blessed with the sight of it, and that as became him, he *kissed* and embrac'd it with great *veneration*. Which by the way seems to me a little strange, that it should be accounted an *honour* and a kindness done to the *Martyrs*, to *adore* that which was the *instrument* of their torment: Might they not by the same reason as well worship their *executioners*, and pay a religious respect to the ashes of those, who drag'd them to the stake, tore off their flesh, and put them to death with all imaginable pain and torture.

III. The *Wheel*. This was a round Engine, to which the body of the condemned person being bound, was not only extreamly distended, but *whirl'd* about with the most violent distortion; the pain whereof was unconceivable, especially as used towards the Primitive Christians, the Wheel to which they were bound naked being sometimes full of *iron pricks*, sometimes a board full of sharp-pointed iron pricks being plac'd under it, so that every time the body of the Martyr came to it, they *rak'd* off the flesh with inexpressible

pressible torment. Thus were serv'd Part 2. those three Martyrs, *Felix* the Presbyter, *Fortunatus* and *Achilleus* the Deacons at *Valentia* in *France*, and hundreds more in other places.

Martyr.  
Rom. ad  
diem April.  
23. p. 249.

IV. *Burning*. This was done sometimes by staking them down to a pile of wood, and setting it on fire; thus suffered *Julianus* and others in the Persecution at *Alexandria*; sometimes by laying them to roast at a slow gentle fire, that they might dye with the greater torment; otherwhiles they were hung up either by the neck, hands or feet, and a fire made under them, either to *burn* or *choak* them; or burning torches held to several parts of their *naked* bodies; sometimes they were placed in an *iron chair*, or laid upon an *iron grate*, which was either made *red hot*, or had a fire continually burning under it: of all which ways of execution, and some other near akin to them, were it not too tedious I could easily give abundant instances. This was accounted one of the *prime* ways of *capital* punishments, and none were adjudged to it but the greatest *Villains*, the *meanest* and vilest persons.

Enseb. H.  
Ecc. lib. 6.  
c. 4. p. 238.

L. 28. Prae-  
fat. §  
Sect. 11 ff.  
de poenis.

Part 2. V. **Throwing to wild Beasts.** This was a punishment very common amongst the *Romans*, to condemn a man to fight for his life with the most savage beasts, *Bears, Leopards, Lions, &c.* and was usually the portion of the vilest and most despicable offenders; under which notion the *Gentiles* looking upon the *Christians* did most commonly condemn them to this kind of death; a thing so familiar, that it became in a manner proverbial, *Christianos ad Leones*, away with the *Christians* to the *Lions*; and that they might be devour'd with the more ease, they were many times tied down to a stake; sometimes cloath'd in *beasts-skins*, the more eagerly to provoke the rage and fury of the wild beasts against them.

VI. **Condemning to the Mines.** To this the *Romans* adjudg'd their *slaves*, and the most infamous malefactors; and to this too the *Christians* were often sent: what their treatment was in those places, besides their continual toyle and drudgery, *Cyprian* lets us know in a letter to *Nemesian* and the rest that labour'd in the Mines, viz. that they were cruelly beaten with clubs, bound with chains, forc'd to lye upon the hard, cold,

cold, damp ground, conflicted with Part 2. hunger, nakedness, the deformity of their heads half shaved, after the manner of slaves, and forc'd to live in the midst of filth and nastiness; besides which they were wont to be mark'd and branded in the face, to have their right eye pull'd out, and their left foot disabled by cutting the nerves and sinews of it; not to say, that being once under this condemnation, all their estate was forfeit to the publick treasury, and themselves for ever reduc'd into the condition of *slaves*. These were some of the more usual ways of punishment amongst the *Romans*, though exercis'd towards the *Christians* in their utmost rigour and severity. I omit to speak of *Christians* being scourg'd and whip'd even to the tiring of their executioners, especially with rods called *plumbate* (whereof there is frequent mention in the *Theodosian Code*.) which were scourges made of cords or thongs with leaden bullets at the end of them; of their being ston'd to death, their being beheaded, their being thrust into stinking and nasty prisons, where they were set in a kind of stocks with five holes, their legs being stretch'd asunder

Part 2. to reach from one end to the other.

We shall now consider some few of those *unusal* torments and punishments which were inflicted only upon Christians, or if upon any others, only in extraordinary cases: Such was their being *tied* to arms of trees bent by great force and strength by certain Engines, and being suddainly let go, did in a moment tear the Martyr in pieces, in which way many were put to death in the persecution at *Thebais*. Sometimes they were clad with *coats* of paper, linnen, or such like, dawb'd in the inside with pitch and brimstone, which being set on fire, they were burnt alive. Otherwhiles they were shut into the belly of a *brazen* Bull, and a fire being kindled under it, were consumed with a torment beyond imagination. Sometimes they were put into a great Pot or *Caldron* full of *boyling* pitch, oyl, lead, or wax mixed together; or had these fatal liquors by holes made on purpose poured into their *bowels*. Some of them were *hung* up by one or both hands, with stones of great weight tied to their feet to augment their sufferings; others were *anointed* all over their bodies with honey, and at mid-day fast-

Euseb. H.  
Ecc. lib. 8.  
c. 9. p. 300.

ned to the top of a pole, that they Part 2.  
might be a prey to flies, wasps, and such little cattle as might by degrees sting and torment them to death; Thus besides many others it was with *Marcus* Bishop of *Arethusa*, a venerable old man who suffered under *Julian* the Apostate; after infinite other tortures they dawb'd him over with honey and jellies, and in a basket fastned to the top of a pole, expos'd him to the *hottest* beams of the Sun, and to the fury of such little *Insects* as would be sure to prey upon him. Sometimes they were put into a *rotten* ship, which being turn'd out to sea was set on fire; thus they serv'd an Orthodox *Presbyter* under *Valens* the *Arrian* Emperour; the same which *Socrates* reports of fourscore pious and devout men, who by the same Emperours command were thrust into a ship, which being brought into open Sea, was presently fir'd, that so by this means they might also want the honour of a burial. And indeed the rage and cruelty of the Gentiles did not only reach the Christians while *alive*, but extend to them after *death*, denying them (what has been otherwise granted amongst the most *barbarous*

Nazianz.  
Orat. i. in  
Jul. p. 82.

Id. Orat.  
20. p. 416.  
lib. 4. c. 16.  
p. 227.



Part 2. *rous* people) the conveniency of burial, exposing them to the ravage and fierceness of *dogs* and beasts of prey, a thing which we are told the Primitive Christians reckon'd as not the least aggravation of their sufferings. Nay, where they had been quietly buried, they were not suffered many times (as *Tertullian* complains) to enjoy the *Assylum* of the grave, but were plucked out, rent and torn in pieces.

*Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 4. c. 1. 165. & de Martyr. Pal. c. 9. p. 334.*

*Apol. 37. p. 30.*

*Lib. 8. c. 12 p. 307.*

*Cypr. ad Demetr. p. 200.*

But to what purpose is it any longer to insist upon these things; sooner may a man tell the *stars*, than reckon up all those methods of misery and suffering which the Christians endured. *Eusebius*, who himself was a sad spectator of some of the later persecutions, professes to give over the account, as a thing beyond all possibility of expression; the manner of their sufferings, and the persons that suffered being hard, nay impossible to be reckoned up. The truth is (as he there observes, and *Cyprian* plainly tells *Demetrian* of it) their enemies did little else but set their wits upon the tenters to find out the most *exquisite* methods of torture and punishment; they were not content with those old ways of torment which

which their forefathers had brought Part 2. in, but by an ingenious cruelty daily invented new, striving to excel one another in this piece of hellish art, and accounting those the wittiest persons that could invent the bitterest and most barbarous engins of execution; and in this they improved so much, that *Ulpian*, Master of Records to *Alexander Severus* the Emperour, and the great Oracle of those Times for Law, writing several Books *de Officio Proconsulis* (many parcels whereof are yet extant in the body of the *Civil Law*) in the *seventh* Book collected together the several bloody *Edicts* which the Emperours had put out against the *Christians*, that he might shew by what ways and methods they ought to be punished and destroyed, as *Lactantius* *De justit. lib. 5. c. 11. p. 491.* tells us. But this Book as to what concern'd Christians is not now extant, the zeal and piety of the first Christian Emperours having banished all Books of that nature out of the World, as appears by a Law of the Emperour *Theodosius*, where he commands the Writings of *Porphry*, and all others that had written against the *Christian Religion* to be burned: The reason why

*L. 3. C. de Sum. Trinit. sect. 1.*

Part 2. why we have no more Books of the Heathens concerning the Christians extant at this day.

Having given this brief *specimen* of some few of those grievous torments to which the Primitive Christians were exposed (they that would have more, must read the *Martyrologies* of the Church, or such as have purposely witten on this subject) we come next to consider what was their *behaviour* and *carriage* under them; this we shall find to have been most *sedate* and *calm*, most constant and resolute; they neither *fainted* nor *fretted*, neither *railed* at their enemies, nor sunk under their hands, but bore up under the heaviest torments, under the bitterest reproaches with a meekness and patience that was invincible, and such as every way became the mild and yet generous spirit of the Gospel. So *Ju-  
skin Martyr* tells the *Jew*; We patiently bear (*says he*) all the mischiefs which are brought upon us either by men or devils, even to the extremities of death and torments, praying for those that thus treat us, that they may find mercy, not desiring to hurt or revenge our selves upon any that injures us, according

*Dial. cum.  
Troph. p.  
236.*

Part 2: cording as our great *Law-giver* has commanded us. Thus *Eusebius* reporting *Orat. de laudib. Constant. c. 7. p. 622.* the hard usage which the Christians met with during the times of persecution, tells us that they were betrayed and butchered by their own friends and brethren; but they as courageous Champions of the true Religion, accustomed to prefer an honourable death in defence of the truth before life it self, little regarded the cruel usage they met with in it: but rather as became true Souldiers of God, armed with patience, they laughed at all methods of execution; fire and sword, and the piercings of nails, wild beasts, and the bottom of the Sea, cutting and burning of limbs, putting out eyes, and mutilation of the whole body, hunger, and digging in Mines, chains and fetters; all which for the great love that they had to their *Lord* and *Master* they accounted *sweeter* than any happiness or pleasure whatsoever. Nay the very *women* in this case were as courageous as the *men*, many of whom undergoing the same conflicts, reaped the same rewards of their constancy and vertue. But this will more distinctly appear in a few particular cases.

*First,*

Part 2. *First*, When ever they were sought for in order to their being condemned and executed, they cared not to make use of *opportunities* to escape. *Polycarp* at his apprehension refused to fly, though going but into the next house might have sav'd his life. *Cyprian* writing to the Confessors, commends them, that when they were oft desired (I suppose he means by their *Gentile*-friends and relations) to go out of prison, they chose rather to abide there still, than to make their own escape; telling them they had made as many confessions, as they had had opportunities to be gone, and had rejected them. Though 'tis true he himself withdrew from *Carthage* when the Officers were sent to take him and carry him to *Utica*, yet he did it (as he tells his people) by the advice of some friends, but for this reason, that when he did suffer, he might suffer at *Carthage* whereof he was Bishop, and that those truths which he had preach'd to them in his life, he might seal before them with his blood; a thing he earnestly and daily begg'd of God, and which was granted to him afterwards. And if they did not run away from suffering

*Epist. ad  
Mosen &  
Max. Ep.  
15. p. 28.*

*Epist. 83.  
p. 161.*

ring, much less did they oppose it, and Part 2. make tumults and parties to defend themselves; no, they were led as *Lambs to the slaughter*, and as *sheep before the shearers are dumb*; so opened not they their mouth; but committed their cause to him that judges righteously, and who has said, *vengeance is mine, and I will repay it.* None of us (says *Cyprian* to the Governour) when apprehended makes resistance, nor (though our party be large and numerous) revenges himself for that unjust violence, that you offer to us: we patiently acquiesce in the assurance of a future vengeance; the *innocent* truckle under the *unrighteous*; the *guiltless* quietly submit to pains and tortures; knowing for certain that what-ever we now suffer shall not remain unpunished, and that the greater the injury that is done us in these persecutions we endure, the more just and heavy will be that vengeance that will follow it: never was any wicked attempt made against Christians, but a divine *vengeance* was soon at the heels of it. But though they thus resolutely stood to't, when the honour of their Religion lay at stake, yet it must not be denied that in some cases they

*Ad Deme-  
trian. p.  
202.*

Part 2. they held it lawful and convenient to fly in times of persecution. *Tertullian* indeed in a Book purposely written on this subject maintains it to be simply and absolutely unlawful for Christians to fly at such a time; an assertion which with all the subtilties of his wit, and the flourishes of his *African* eloquence he endeavours to render fair and pausable. But besides the strictness and rigid severity of the man at all times, this Book was composed after his complying with the Sect of the *Montanists*, whose peculiar humour it was to out-do the *Orthodox* by overstraining the austerities of Religion, as appears not only in this, but in the case of *marriages*, *fasts*, *pennances*, and such like. Otherwise before his espousing those opinions he seems elsewhere to speak more favourably of shunning persecution. But whatever he thought in the case, 'tis certain the generality of the *Fathers* were of another mind, that Christians might and ought to use prudence in this affair, and at some times withdraw to avoid the storm when it was a coming, especially in these two Cases.

I. When persons were of more than ordinary

*De patient.*  
c. 13. p.  
147.

ordinary use and eminency, the saving Part 2. of whom might be of great advantage to the Church. Thus *S. Paul* was let down the wall in a basket, when the Governour of *Damascus* sought his life. Thus *Cyprian* withdrew from *Carthage*, and lay hid for two years together, during which time he gave secret orders for governing of the Church. Thus *Athanasius*, when *Syrianus* and his Souldiers broke into the Church to apprehend him, was by the universal cry both of Clergy and people persuaded and in a manner forced to retire and save himself, in which retirement he continued so long, that the *Arrians* charg'd him with fear and cowardise, insomuch that for his own vindication he was forced to write an *Apolo*gy for himself, wherein he learnedly and eloquently discourses the whole affair, justifying himself from the instances of the Old Testament of *Jacob*, *Moses*, *David*, *Elias*; from the example of *Christ* himself and his *Apostles* in the New, from the plain and positive allowance of the Gospel, *when they persecute you in one City, flee into another, and that when they should see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place*

*Athanas. Apol. de fug. sua Tom. I. p. 545.*

M

place

Part 2. place (*i. e.* the miseries that were to come upon Jerusalem by the Roman Army) they should fly unto the mountains, and if upon the house top, or in the field, not turn back to fetch any thing that was left behind; that 'twas necessary for the Apostles to shun the storm, because they were the instruments immediately deputed to propagate and convey the Gospel to the World; that they were herein imitated by the Primitive Saints and Martyrs, who wandered about in deserts and mountains and in dens and caves of the earth, being equally careful to avoid the two extremes of rashness and cowardise, they would neither thrust themselves upon danger, nor basely run from death, when call'd to it, like wise Physicians reserving themselves for the use of those that needed their assistance. All which and a great deal more he rationally urges in that *Apology*.

II. Another case wherein they accounted it lawful for persons to retire under persecutions was, when being but new Converts and as yet weak in the faith, they look'd upon them as not likely to bear the shock and brunt of the persecution; in this case they thought

thought it better for them to withdraw Part 2. for the present, than to put them under a temptation of being drawn back to Paganism and Idolatry. Thus when Gregory Bishop of Neocæsarea saw the Decian persecution grow extream hot and violent, considering the frailty and infirmity of humane nature, and how few would be able to bear up under those fierce conflicts that must be undergone for the sake of Religion, perswaded his Church a little to decline that dreadful and terrible storm, telling them 'twas a great deal better to save their souls by flying, than by abiding those furious trials to run the hazard of falling from the faith: and that his counsel might make the deeper impression upon them, and he might convince them that in thus doing there was no danger or prejudice to their souls, he resolved to shew them the way by his own example, and himself first retiring out of the reach of danger, retreated to the mountainous parts thereabouts that were freest from the rage and malice of the enemy. Nor was this any impeachment of their zeal and readiness for suffering, but only a prudent gaining a little respite for

Nelson. O.  
rat. de vit.  
Greg. Thau-  
mat. p.  
1001.  
tom. 2.

Part 2. a time, that they might suffer with greater advantage afterwards. They did not desire to save their heads, when the honour of their Religion call'd for it, nor ever by indirect means screw'd themselves out of danger; when once engaged in it, though they did sometimes prudently prevent it, reserving themselves for a more convenient season. Thus *Cyprian* withdrew a little, not out of fear of suffering, but a desire to prevent his being put to death in an *obscure* place (which his enemies had designed) being desirous his Martyrdom should happen in that place, where he so long liv'd, and so publicly preached the Christian faith.

*Secondly*, They were so far from declining suffering, and being terrified with those miseries which they saw others undergo, that they freely and in great multitudes offered themselves to the rage and fury of their enemies; embracing death as the greatest honour that could be done them; they strove (as *Sulpitius Severus* observes, speaking of the ninth persecution) which should rush first upon those glorious conflicts; men in those days (as he adds)

*Sac. Hist.*  
*lib. 2. p.*  
143.

adds) much more greedily seeking Part 2. *Martyrdom* in the cause of *Christ*, than in after-times they did for *Bishopricks* and the preferments of the Church. *Lucian* who certainly had very little love to Christians, yet gives this account of them: The miserable wretches (says he, *οἱ κακοδαίμονες*) do verily persuade them, *i. e.* those of their own party, that they shall surely be *immortal* and live for ever; upon which account they *despise* death, and many of them voluntarily offer themselves to it. Indeed they did ambitiously contend who should be *first* crown'd with Martyrdom, and that in such multitudes, that their enemies knew not what to do with them, their very persecutors grew *weary* of their bloody offices. *Tiberianus* the President of *Palestine* in his relation to the Emperor *Trajan*, (recorded by *Joannes Mactela*, mentioned also by *Suidas*) gives this account of his proceedings against them; *I am quite tir'd out in punishing and destroying the Galileans (call'd here by the name of Christians) according to your commands; and yet they cease not to offer themselves to be slain: Nay, though I have laboured*

*De mort.*  
*Peregr.*  
*Tom. 2. p.*  
763.

*Apud Us.*  
*Ser. Appen.*  
*Ignat. p. 9.*  
*ex Jo. Mactela.*  
*Chron.*  
*lib. 11. vid.*  
*Annot. in*  
*Ep. ad Philad.*  
*not.*  
82.  
*In voc.*  
*Τεζιανός.*

Part 2. *both by fair means and threatnings to make them conceal themselves from being known to be Christians, yet can I not stave them off from persecution.* So little regard had they to sufferings, nay so impatient were they till they were in the midst of flames. This made

*Tertul. ad Arrius Antoninus* the Proconsul of *Asia*, when at first he severely persecuted the Christians, whereupon all the Christians in that City like an *Army* voluntarily presented themselves before his Tribunal, to be surpriz'd with wonder, and causing only some few of them to be executed, he cried out to the rest, *O unhappy people, if you have a mind to die, have you not halters, and precipices enough to end your lives with, but you must come hither for an execution?* so fast did they flock to the place of torment, faster than *droves* of beasts that are driven to the shambles. They even long'd to be in the arms of suffering.

*Euseb. H. E. lib 3. c. 38 p. 107.*

*Ignatius* though then in his journey to *Rome* in order to his execution, yet by the way as he went could not but vent his passionate desire of it; O that I might come to those *wild beasts*, that are prepar'd for me; I heartily wish that I may presently meet with them;

I would invite and encourage them *Part 2.*  
*speedily* to devour me, and not be afraid to set upon me as they have been to others; nay should they refuse it, I would even *force* them to it: I am concern'd for nothing either *seen* or *unseen* more than to enjoy *Jesus Christ*: Let *fire* and the *cross*, and the rage of *wild beasts*; the breaking of *bones*, *distortion* of members, *bruising* of the whole body, yea all the punishments which the *devil* can invent, come upon me, so as I may but *enjoy Christ*. They even envied the Martyrdom of others, and mourned that any went before, while they were left behind.

When *Laurentius* the Deacon espied *Sixtus* the Bishop of *Rome* going to his Martyrdom, he burst into tears, and passionately call'd out, Whither O my *Father* art thou going without thy *Son*? Whither so fast O holy *Bishop* without thy *Deacon*? Never didst thou use to offer spiritual *sacrifice* without thy *Minister* to attend thee; what have I done that might displease thee? Hast thou found me *degenerous* and fearful? Make trial at least, whether thou hast chosen a fit Minister to wait upon thee. To this and more to the same import,

*Ambr. offic. lib. 1. c. 42. Tom. 1. p. 26.*

Part 2. the good Bishop replied, Mistake not *my Son*, I do not *leave* thee nor *forfake* thee: Greater tryals belong to *thee*; I like a weak old man receive only the first skirmishes of the battle, but thou being youthful and valiant hast a more glorious triumph over the enemy *reserv'd* for thee: Cease to weep, thy turn will be presently, for within *three days* thou shalt follow me. So pious a contention was there between these good men, which of them should first suffer for the name of Christ. 'Tis memorable what we find concerning *Origen* though then but a *youth*, that when a great persecution was raised at *Alexandria*, wherein many suffered, he was so eagerly inflamed with a desire of Martyrdom (especially after his Father had been seized upon and cast into prison) that he expos'd himself to all dangers, and courted torments to come upon him; and had certainly suffered, if his Mother after all other intreaties and persuasions to no purpose, had not stoln away his *clothes* by night, and for meer shame forced him to stay at home.

To these I shall add but one Example of the weaker Sex. When *Valens* the

*Euseb. H.  
Eccl. lib. 6.  
c. 2 p. 202.*

the *Arrian* Emperour (who persecuted Part 2. the *Orthodox* with as much fury and bitterness as any of the Heathen Emperours) came to *Edeffa*, and found there great numbers of them daily meeting in their publick assemblies, he severely check'd the Governour, and commanded him by all means to rout and ruine them. The Governour though of another perswasion, yet out of common compassion gave them *private* notice of the Emperours commands, hoping they would forbear. But they not at all terrified with the news, met the next morning in greater numbers, which the Governour understanding went to the place of their assembly; as he was going, a woman in a careless dress leading a little child in her hand rush'd through the Governours *Guard*, who commanding her to be brought before him, asked her why she made so much *hast*? That I may the *sooner* come (*said she*) to the place where the people of the *Catholick* Church are met together; Knowst thou not (*said he*) that the *Governour* will be there to day, and *kill* all whom he finds there? I know it well (*answered the woman*) and therefore make so much

*Sozom. H.  
Eccl. lib. 6.  
c. 18. p.  
660.*



2. much hast, lest I come *too late*, and be depriv'd of the *Crown* of Martyrdom. And being asked, why she carried her *little Son* along with her, she answered, That he also may *partake* of the common sufferings, and share in the same rewards. The *Governour* admiring the courage of the woman, turn'd back to the *Palace*, and dissuaded the Emperor from his cruel resolution, as what was neither *honourable* in it self, nor would *conduce* to his purposes and designs.

*Thirdly*, When they were condemn'd, though it was by a most unjust sentence, and to a most horrid death, they were so far from raging or repining, that instead of bitter and tart reflections, they *gave thanks* to their enemies for condemning them. A Christian being condemn'd (says *Tertullian*) thanks his Judges, he takes it for a favour to *dye* for so good a cause. That they persecute us (says *Clemens* of *Alexandria*) it is not because they find us to be *wicked*, but because they think we wrong the world by being Christians, and by teaching and perswading others to be so; as for us, they do us no harm, death does but the sooner send

*Apol. c. 46.*  
*p. 36.*  
*Strom. lib.*  
*4. p. 505.*

send us to God; if therefore we be wise, Part II.  
we shall thank them that are the occasion of our more speedy passage thither. And elsewhere he tells us of *S. Peter*, that seeing his *Wife* going towards Martyrdom, he exceedingly rejoiced that she was called to so great an *honour*, and that she was now returning home; encouraging and exhorting of her, and calling her by her name, bad her to be *mindful* of our *Lord*: Such (says he) was the wedlock of that blessed couple, and their perfect disposition and agreement in those things that were dearest to them.

*Lib. 7. p.*  
*736.*

When *Lucius* one of the Primitive Martyrs was charged by *Urbicius* the *Roman* Prefect for being a Christian, only because he offer'd to speak in behalf of one that had very hard measure, he immediately confess'd it, and being forthwith condemn'd, he heartily thanked his Judge for it, that by this means he should be deliver'd from such unrighteous Governours and be sooner sent home to his Heavenly Father. No joyfuller message could be told them, than that they must dye for the sake of *Christ*: Though we contend with all  
your

*Iust. Martyr.*  
*1. p. 43.*

Part 2. your rage and cruelty (as *Tertullian* *Ad Scap. c.* tells the President *Scapula*) yet we  
1. p. 68.

freely offer our selves, and rejoyce more when we are condemned, than when we are absolved and released by you. In despite of all the malice of their enemies they accounted the instruments of their torment, the ensigns of their honour and their happiness:

*Apol. c. 30.*  
p. 39.

When the Heathens reproached them for dying such an infamous death as that of the *Cross*, and in derision styled them *Sarmenticil* and *Semaxii* for being burnt upon a little stake to which they were bound with twigs; *Tertullian* answers for them, *This is the habit of our victory, this the embroidered garment of our conquest, this the triumphant chariot wherein we ride to Heaven.*

*Euseb. H. Eccl. lib. 5. c. 1. p. 160.*  
c.

When in prison, they looked upon their *Chains* as their *Ornaments*, as adding a beauty and a lustre to them, with which they were adorn'd against the time of their sufferings, as the bride is with fringes of gold and variegated ornaments against the day of her espousals. For this reason *Babylas* the Martyr commanded that the *Chains* which he had worn in prison should be buried with him, to shew that those things

*Chrysost. l. de S. Babyl. tom. 1. p. 669.*

things which seem most ignominious, Part 2. are for the sake of Christ most splendid and honourable; imitating therein the great *Apostle*, who was so far from being ashamed of, that he took pleasure in *Bonds, Chains, Reproaches, Persecutions, Distresses for Christ's sake*, professing to *Glory in nothing but the Cross of Christ.*

Fourthly, When ever they were actually under the bitterest torments, they never discovered the least sign of a *furious* or *impatient* mind, but bore up with a quietness and composure which no sufferings could overcome.

*Epist. 8. p. 19.*

*Cyprian* exhorting the Martyrs to courage and constancy, tells them this of those that had gone before them, that in the hottest conflict they never stirred, but maintained their ground with a free confession, an *unshaken* mind, a *divine* courage, destitute indeed of *external* weapons, but armed with the *shield of Faith*; in torments they stood *stronger* than their tormentors; their bruised and mangled limbs proved too hard for the instruments wherewith their flesh was rack'd and pull'd from them; the blows though never so oft repeated could not conquer their impregnable

Part 2. pregnable Faith, although they did not only slice and teare off the flesh, but rake into their very bowels; and let out blood enough to *extinguish* the flames of persecution, and to *allay* the heats of the everlasting fire. And in another place speaking of the persecution under *Decius* at *Rome*, he tells us that the Adversary did with an horrible violence break in upon the *Camp* of *Christ*, but was repulsed with a strength as great as that wherewith he came upon them: that then he craftily attempted the more rude and weak, and subtilly endeavoured to set upon them singly, hoping the easilier to circumvent them; but that he found them like a *well-compact* army, sober and vigilant, and prepared for battel; that they could *dye*, but could not be overcome; yea therefore *unconquerable* because *not afraid* to dye; that they did not resist those that rose up against them, being ready not to kill them that assaulted them, but to lay down their own lives and to lose their blood; that they might make the more haste to get out of a cruel and malicious world. Indeed so admirable was their patience and readiness to dye, that their very

Ad Cornel.  
Epist. 57. p.  
91.

*enemies*

*enemies* stood amaz'd at it. When *Simon* the second Bishop of *Jerusalem*, and of our *Saviours* kindred according to the flesh, had by the command of *Atticus* the Governour of *Syria* been tortur'd with all the arts of cruelty for many days together, he bore it with such courage, that the *Proconsul* himself, and all that were present greatly wondred that a man of *an hundred and twenty years* of age should be able to undergo so many miseries and torments. Of the Martyrs that suffered together with *S. Polycarp*, the Church of *Smyrna* gives this account, That all that were present were astonished when they saw them whipp'd till the cords made way to the *inmost* veins and arteries, till the *bowels* and the most hidden parts of the body appeared. They were rak'd with shells of fishes, laid all along upon sharp-pointed stakes driven into the ground, exercised with all sorts of torments, and at last thrown to be devoured of wild beasts; all which they bore with a mighty patience and constancy. Nay, as we find it in the first part of that *Epistle* (contracted by *Eusebius*, but published at large by Bishop *Usher*) so great

Append. Ig-  
natian.  
Part. 2. p.  
14.

Ib. lib. 4 c.  
15. p. 129.

Euseb. lib.  
3. c. 32. p.  
104.

Part 2.

Part 2. great was their patience and magnanimity, that in all these sufferings not any of them gave a *sigh* or a *groan*: The holy Martyrs of Christ (*says the Epistle*) evidently shewing us, that during this sad hour of suffering they were *strangers* to their own bodies, or rather that our Lord himself stood by them and familiarly conversed with them, and that being partaker of his *Grace* they made light of these *temporal* torments, and by one short hour delivered themselves from *eternal* miseries: The fire which their tormentors put to them seemed to them but *cool* and *little*, while they had it in their thoughts to avoid the everlasting and unextinguishable *flames* of another world; their eyes being fixed upon those rewards which are prepared for them *that endure to the end*, such as *neither ear hath heard, nor eye hath seen, nor hath it entred into the heart of man*, but which were shewn to them by our Lord, as being now ready to go off from mortality, and to enter upon the *state of Angels*.

Encom. in  
40 Martyr.  
append ad  
oper. Greg.  
Thaum. p.  
85.

Thus reason'd those forty Martyrs in S. Basil, that suffered at *Sebastia* in *Armenia* in the Reign of *Licinius*, when the Governour to contrive a new method

thod of Torment, had commanded Part 2. them to stand *naked* all night in cold frosty weather (which in those more *Northberly* Countries is extream sharp, and bitter, it being then the depth of winter, and the *North* wind blowing very fierce) in a *pond* of water; they first gave thanks to God that they put off their *cloaths* and their *sins* together, and then comforted one another by balancing their *present* hardships with their *future* hopes; Is the weather *sharp*? (*said they*) but *Paradise* is *comfortable* and *delightful*; Is the *frost* cold and bitter? the *rest* that remains is *sweet* and *pleasant*; let us but hold out a *little*, and *Abrahams* bosome will refresh us; we shall change this *one* night for an *eternal* age of happiness; let our *feet* glow with very *cold*, so as they may for ever rejoyce and triumph with *Angels*; let our *hands* *sink* down, so as we may have liberty to *lift* them up to God. How many of our fellow-souldiers have lost their lives to keep faith to their *temporal* Prince? And should we be unfaithful to the true *King* of Heaven? How many have *justly* died for their crimes and villanies? And shall we refuse it in the cause of *righteousness* and

Part 2. and Religion? 'Tis but the *flesh* that suffers, let us not spare it; since we must die, let us *die* that we may *live*: Thus generously did they bear up under this uncomfortable state; their ardent desires of Heaven from within, extinguishing all sense of cold and hardship from without. Nay, when a little before their Commander had set upon them both with threatnings and promises, assuring them, that if they would but *deny Christ*, they should make their own terms for riches and honour; they told him, that he laid his *snare* at a wrong door; that he could not *give* them, what he endeavoured to *take* from them; nor could they close with his offers, without being infinitely losers by the bargain; that 'twas to no purpose to profer a *little* of the world to them, who despised the *whole* of it; that all these visible advantages were nothing to what they had in hope and expectation; all the beauty and glory of Heaven and Earth not being comparable to that state of blessedness which is the *portion* of the righteous; the one being *short-liv'd* and transitory, the other *permanent* and perpetual; that they were ambitious of

*Ibid.* p. 81.

of no *gift*, but the Crown of Righteousness, nor sought after any other *Glory* but what was *Heavenly*; that they *feared* no torments but those of *Hell*, and that fire that was truly terrible; as for those punishments they inflicted, they accounted them but as the *blows* of children; and the ill usage that their bodies met with, the longer 'twas endured, the more way it made for a *brighter* crown. Such was the temper, such the support of these Christian Souldiers, these *true Champions* of the Christian Faith.

Indeed this consideration was one of the greatest Cordials that kept up their spirits under the saddest sufferings, that they were *assured* of a reward in Heaven: Amongst us (*says Cyprian*) there flourishes strength of *Hope*, firmness of *Faith*, a mind *erect* amongst the ruins of a tottering age, an immoveable *virtue*, a *patience* serene and chearful, and a soul always *secure* and certain of its *God*. As for want or danger, what are these to Christians, to the servants of God, whom *Paradise* invites, and the favour and plenty of the *heavenly* Kingdom expects and waits for? They are always glad, and rejoyce in God, and

N 2 resolutely

Part 2. resolutely bear the evils and miseries of the world, while they look for the rewards and prosperities of another life.

*Præparat. Evang. lib. 1. c. 4. p. 13.* The great *Philosophers* (as *Eusebius* observes) as much as they talk'd of *immortality*, yet by their carriage they shewed that they looked upon it but as a trifling and childish *fable*; whereas (*says he*) amongst us even *girls* and *children*, the most unlearned and (measured by the eye) the meanest and most despicable persons, being assisted by the help and strength of our blessed *Saviour*, do rather by their *actions* than their *words* demonstrate and make good this doctrine of the immortality of the Soul. This *Julian* confesses of the *Christians*, though according to his custom he gives them bad words, calls them *Atheists* and irreligious persons, that being acted by some evil spirits they perswade themselves that death is by all means to be desired, and that they shall immediately *fly* to Heaven, as soon as their souls are freed from the *fetters* of the body. Hence it was, that in those times *Christians* were wont to sing *Hymns* and *Psalms* at the *Funerals* of the dead, to signify that they had attain'd their *Rest*, the end of their la-

*Fragm. Ep. Oper. Part. 1. p. 528.*

bours,

bours, the retribution of their troubles, Part 2. the reward and the crown of their conflicts and sufferings, as *Chrysostome* tells us; part of which *Psalms* he elsewhere tells us were, *Return unto thy rest O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*; and, *I will fear no evil, because thou art with me*; and again, *thou art my refuge from the trouble that compasses me about*. For the same reason, as being a sign of joy and cheerfulness, he there tells us that they carried *lights* burning before the corps: by all which he tells us they signified, that they carried forth *Christians* as *Champions* to the grave, glorifying God, and giving thanks to him that he had crowned the deceased person, that he had delivered him from his labours, that he had taken him to himself, and set him beyond the reach of storms and fears.

But to return; There was scarce any one instance of Religion wherein Primitive Christianity did more openly approve it self to the world, and more evidently *insult* over *Paganism*, than the generous courage and patience of its professors. By this they commended both the *Truth* and *Excellency* of their Religion, and conquer'd their

*Hom. 51. de SS. Bern. & Prosd. tom. 1. p. 563. Rom. 4. ad Hebr. p. 1785. Psal. 116. Psal. 24. 4.*

*Ib. p. 1784.*

Part 2. very enemies into an embracing of it.  
*De justit. lib. 3. c. 13. p. 495.*  
 Hear how *Lactantius* pleads the argument and triumphs in the goodness of his cause: By reason (*says he*) of our strange and wonderful courage and strength *new additions* are made to us; for when the people see men torn in pieces with infinite variety of torments, and yet maintain a patience *unconquerable*, and able to tire out its tormentors; they begin to think (what the truth is) that the *consent* of so many, and the *perseverance* of dying persons cannot be in vain; nor that *patience* it self, were it not from God, could hold out under such racks and tortures: *Thieves*, and men of a *robust* body are not able to bear such tearing in pieces; they groan and cry out, and are overcome with pain, because not endued with a divine patience; but our very *children* and *women* (to say nothing of our *men*) do with silence *conquer* their tormentors, nor can the hottest fire force the least groan from them. Let the *Romans* go now and boast of their *Mutius* and *Regulus*, of the one for delivering himself up to his enemy to be put to *death*, because he was ashamed to *live* a prisoner; of the other for burning

burning his hand at the command of Part 2.  
 the enemy to save his life: Behold, with us the *weaker* Sex, and the most *tender* age can suffer all parts of their body to be torn and burnt, not out of *necessity*, because they might not escape if they would, but out of *choice*, because they believe in God. This is that true Vertue, which Philosophers indeed vainly *boast* of, but never really *possessed*. This and more to the same purpose that eloquent *Apologist* there urges to the great honour of his Religion. By the force of such arguments *Justine Martyr* confesses that he was brought over from being a *Platonick* *Apol. 1. p. 50.* Philosopher to be a *Christian*: for when he saw the *Christians* whom he had so often heard accused and traduced, undauntedly going to *die*, and embracing the most terrible executions that were prepared for them; *I thought with my self* (*says he*) *that it was not possible such persons should wallow in vice and luxury; it being the interest of all wicked and voluptuous persons to shun death, to dissemble with Princes and Magistrates, and to do any thing to save their lives.*

This certainly could not but be a  
 N 4 huge

Part 2. huge satisfaction to all prudent and considerate men that the Christians were guided by *better* Principles than ordinary, and that they were fully assured that *theirs* was the *true* Religion, and that they taught nothing but what they firmly believed to be true. For to maintain such patience and constancy even unto death (*says Origen*, speaking of the *Apostles* propagating the doctrine of *Christ*) is not the *fashion* of those who feign things of their own heads; but is a manifest argument to all *candid* and ingenuous Readers, that they knew what they writ to be true, when they so chearfully endured so many and such grievous things only for the sake of the Son of God, in whom they had believed. No dangers could affright them, no threatnings or torments could baffle them out of their profession: Therefore when *Celsus* accused the *Christians* for a *fearful* sort of men, and such as lov'd their Carcasses well; *Origen* answers, No such matter, *We can as chearfully lay down our bodies to suffer for Religion, as the hardiest Philosopher of you all can put off his coat.* And indeed the Gospel did mightily prosper and triumph in the midst of these

*Adv. Cels.*  
*lib. 2. p. 69.*

*lib. 7. p.*  
*357.*

these dreadful sufferings; men rationally concluding that there must be something more than *humane* in that doctrine, for which so many thus deeply ventur'd. So *Tertullian* tells *Scapula* in the conclusion of his Book; *It's to no purpose to think this Sect will fail, which you will see to be the more built up, the faster 'tis pull'd down; for who is there, that beholding such eminent patience, cannot but have some scruples started in his mind, and be desirous to enquire into the cause of it, and when he once knows the Truth, he himself moved to close with it and embrace it.* Therefore *Julian* the *Apostate* out of a cursed policy refused many times openly to put *Christians* to death, partly because he envied them the *honour* of being *Martyrs*, partly because he saw that they were like *new mown grass*, the oftner it was cut down, the *thicker* it sprang up again.

I shall add no more concerning this subject, but the *testimony* which the very *enemies* of *Christians* gave them in this case. *Julian* the *Emperour* (whom we so lately mention'd, and who fought against *Christians* with their own *weapons*, making use of those

*Scriptures*

*Max. in*  
*Jul. In-*  
*vel. 1. p.*  
*72.*



Part 2. *Scriptures* which he had studied while he was amongst them) when the Christians complained to him of those oppressions and injuries which the Governours of *Provinces* laid upon them, made light of it, and dismissed them with this virulent sarcasm, *Your Christ* (says he) *has given you a Law, that when you suffer unjustly, you should bear it resolutely, and when oppressed and injured should not answer again.* And so certainly they did, undergoing all kinds of miseries, and death it self with so unconcerned a mind, that elsewhere he censures them for this very reason to be acted by the *Spirit* of the Devil. Hence *Porphyry* in a Book that he wrote against the *Christians*, calls their Religion τὸ βάρβαρον τὸ λημμα, a piece of barbarous boldness; Barbarous, because so different from the way of worship amongst the *Greeks*, with whom every thing was barbarous that agreed not with their principles and institutions: *Boldness*, because the *Christians* shewed such an undaunted courage in bearing miseries and torments, chusing to die a thousand times rather than to deny *Christ*, and sacrifice to the gods. For this reason the Heathen in *M. Felix* styles

Niceph.  
Eccl. Hist.  
lib. 10. c.  
24. tom. 2.  
p. 53.

Erag. Epist.  
loc. supr.  
laudat.

Enseb. H.  
Eccl. lib. 6.  
c. 19. p.  
320.

styles the *Christians* men of an undone, Part 2. furious, and desperate party; respecting their fearless and resolute carriage under sufferings, for so he explains himself presently after; *Is it not a strange folly, and an incredible boldness? they despise torments that are present, and yet fear those that are future and uncertain; and while they fear to die after death, in the mean time they are not afraid to die: so sillily do they flatter themselves, and cajole their fears by a deceitful hope of some unknown comforts that shall arise to them.* This *Arrian* in his Collection of *Epistles* his Dissertations confesses to be true of those, whom according to *Julians* style he calls the *Galileans*, that they underwent torments and death with a mighty courage, but which he makes to be the effect only of use and a customary bearing sufferings. The Emperor *M. Antoninus* confesses also the matter of fact, that the *Christians* did thus readily and resolutely die, but ascribes it not to judgment and a rational consideration, but to meer stubbornness and obstinacy. And in an *Epistle* (if that *Epistle* as now extant be his) that he wrote to the *Common Council* of *Asia* in favour of the *Christians*, whom his

Lib 4 c. 7.  
p. 500.

Epist. c.  
Erag. lib.  
11. Sect. 3.  
p. 106.

Apud Enseb.  
Hist. Eccl.  
lib. 4. c. 13.  
p. 126.

Part 2. his Officers there did grievously vex and oppress, gives them this testimony, that they could have no greater kindness done them than to be called in question, and that they had much rather be *put to death* for their Religion, than to have their *lives* spared to them: by which means they became conquerors, choosing rather to part with their lives, than to do what you impose upon them. Let me advise you (*says he*) who are ready to despond with every *earth-quake* that happens to you, to compare your selves with them; they in all their dangers are securely *confident* in their God; while you at such a time *neglect* the gods, and have little or no regard, either to other rites, or to the worship of that immortal deity, but banish the *Christians* that worship him, and persecute them unto death. So forcibly did the Majesty of Truth extort a confession from its greatest enemies.

*The End of the Second Part.*

Primitive

## Primitive Christianity;

### OR, THE RELIGION OF THE Ancient Christians

In the first Ages of the Gospel.

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#### PART III.

*Of their Religion as respecting  
other men.*

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#### CHAP. I.

Of their Justice and Honesty.

*Christian Religion admirably provides  
for moral righteousness. Do as you  
would be done by, the great Law of  
Christ:*

*Christ: This rule highly priz'd by Severus the Emperour. The first Christians accounted honesty and an upright carriage a main part of their Religion. Their candor and simplicity in their words: Abhorring lies and mental reservations, though it might save their lives. Their veracity such, as no need to be put to thir oaths. Some few of the Fathers against all swearing: Allowed by the greatest part in weighty Cases: That they took oaths proved from Athanasius, and their taking the Sacramentum militare: The form of the oath out of Vegetius: The same expressly affirmed of the more antient Christians by Tertullian. Why refusing to swear by the Emperours genius. Oaths wont to be taken at the holy Sacrament, upon the Communion Table, or the holy Gospels. Some against all oaths only to prevent a possibility of perjury. Bearing false witness condemned and strictly punished by the antient Church. A famous Instance of divine vengeance pursuing three false accusers. Christians careful in the conduct of their actions. Their integrity in matters of distributive Justice: In commutative*

*tive Justice avoiding all fraud and over-reaching. S. Augustin's instance. Nicotratus forced to fly to avoid the punishment of cheating and sacrilege. The Christians unjustly accused of sacrilege by the Heathens: The occasion of it. Pliny's testimony of the Honesty of Christians. Theft and rapine severely condemned. Christians for doing all the good they could. Their care to right and relieve the oppressed. The Gentiles charged Christians with murder and eating mans-flesh. A brief representation of the several answers returned to it by the Christian Apologists. The true rise of the charge found to spring from the barbarous and inhumane practices of the Gnosticks mentioned by Irenæus and Epiphanius.*

**H**AVING given some account of the Religion of the antient Christians, both as it respected their piety towards God, and their sober and vertuous carriage towards themselves; we come in the last place to consider it in reference to their carriage towards others, which the Apostle describes under the title of righteousness

**Part 3.** *teousness*, under which he comprehends all that duty and respect wherein we stand *obliged* to others; whereof we shall consider these following instances: their *justice* and *integrity* in matters of commerce and traffick; their mutual *love* and *charity* to one another; their *unity* and *peaceableness*; and their *submission* and subjection to *civil* Government.

I begin with the first, their **just** and **upright** carriage in their *outward* dealings; one great design of the *Christian* Law is to establish and ratify that great *principle* which is one of the prime and *fundamental* Laws of nature, *to hurt no man*, and *to render to every one his due*, to teach us to carry our selves as becomes us in our relations towards men. Next to our duty towards *God*, the Gospel obliges us to be *righteous* to men, sincere and upright in all our dealings, *not going beyond, nor defrauding one another in any matter, to put away lying, and to speak truth to each other as fellow-members* of the same *Christian* brother-hood and society. It settles that *golden* rule as the fundamental Law of all *just* and equitable commerce, *that all things*

*whatsoever*

*whatsoever we would that men should do to us, we should even do so to them, this being the sum of the Law and the Prophets;* than which as no rule could have been more *equitable* in it self, so none could possibly have been contrived more *short* and plain, and more accommodate to the common cases of humane life. Upon the account of these, and such like excellent precepts, *Alexander Severus* the *Roman* Emperour had so great an honour for our *Saviour*, that he was resolved to build a *Temple* to him, and to receive him into the number of their *gods*; and though he was over-rul'd in this by some who having consulted the Oracle, told him, that if it were done, all men would become *Christians*, and the Temples of the gods would be left naked and empty; yet in his most private *Chappel* he had the *Image* of *Christ* amongst those of many *Noble Heroes* and *deified* persons, to whom he pay'd religious adoration every Morning; and particularly for this precept, *that what we would not have done to our selves; we should not do to others* (which his own *Historian* confesses he learnt either from the *Jews* or *Christians*, but most certainly

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*Lamprid. in vit. Alex. Sev. c. 43. p. 568.*

*Ibid. c. 29. p. 540.*

*Ibid. c. 33. p. 577.*

Part 3. from the *Christians*, in whose *mouths* it so often was, and in whose *Gospel* it was so plainly written) he so highly valued it, that in all publick punishments he caused it to be *proclaim'd* by a common *Crier*; nay, was so hugely fond on't, that he caused it to be written upon the *walls* of his Palace, and upon all his publick *Buildings*, that if possible, every *room* in his Court, and every place in the City might be a silent *Chancery* and Court of Equity.

So vast a reverence had the very *enemies* of Christianity for the *Gospel* upon this account, that it so admirably provides for the advance of civil righteousness and justice amongst men; which however it has been slighted by some even amongst *Christians* under the notion of *moral* Principles, yet without it all other *Religion is but vain*, it being a strange piece of folly for any to dream of being *godly* without being *honest*, or to think of being a *disciple* of the first, while a man is an *enemy* to the second Table. Sure I am, the *Christians* of old look'd upon honesty and an upright carriage as a considerable part of their Religion; and, that to speak *truth*, to keep their *words*,

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to perform *oaths* and *promises*, to act Part 3. sincerely in all their *dealings*, was as sacred and as dear to them as their lives and beings. *Speech* being the great instrument of mutual commerce and traffick, shall be the first instance of their integrity; They ever used the greatest candor and simplicity in expressing their mind to one another, not pretending what was *false*, nor concealing what was *true*; *yea, yea*, and *nay, nay*, was the usual measure of their transactions; a *lie* they abhorr'd as *bad* in all, as *monstrous* in a *Christian*, as directly opposite to that *truth*, to which they had consigned and delivered up themselves in baptism, and therefore would not tell one, though it were to *save* their lives. When the Heathens charged them with folly and madness that they would so resolutely suffer, when a parcel of fair words might make way for them to escape, telling them 'twas but doing or saying as they were bid; and that they might secure their consciences by *mental* reservations; *Tertullian* lets them know that they rejected the motion with the highest scorn, as the plain *artifice* and invention of the *devil*. When we are

*Tertullian* Apol.  
c. 27. p. 26.

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most

Part 3. most severely examined (says *Justin*  
*Apol. 1. p. 43.* *Martyr*) we never *deny* our selves,  
 counting it *impious* in any thing to  
 dissemble or deny the truth, as we  
 know the contrary is acceptable unto  
 God : and though we could (as they  
*Ib. Apol. 2. p. 57.* told the *Emperours*) when questioned,  
*evade* or *deny* it, yet we scorn to *live*  
 upon any terms, by which we must be  
 forced to maintain our lives by *lies* and  
*falsehood*.

This honest and ingenuous simplici-  
 ty they practised to that exactness and  
 accuracy, that for a *Christian* to be put  
 to his *oath* was accounted a disparage-  
 ment to his *fidelity* and truth. So *Cle-*  
*Stromat. lib. 7. p. 728.* *mens Alexandrinus* tells us; he that  
 approves himself and is tried (*says he*)  
 in *this* [*i.e.* the *Christian*] way of pie-  
 ty and Religion, is far from being for-  
 ward either to *lie* or *swear*: For an  
 oath is a determinative assertion,  
 with a calling God to witness for  
 the truth of it: But how shall any  
 one that is faithful, so far render him-  
 self *unfaithful* or unworthy of belief,  
 as to *need* an oath, and not rather make  
 the course of his life a *testimony* to him  
 as firm and positive as an *oath*, and de-  
 monstrate the truth of his assertion by  
 the

the constant and immutable tenor of Part 3.  
 his words and actions. It's enough  
 therefore (as he presently after adds)  
 for every good man either by way of  
 affirmation or denial to give this assu-  
 rance, *ἀληθῶς λέγω, I speak truly*, to sa-  
 tisfie any that apprehend not the cer-  
 tainty of what he says; for towards  
*those that are without* he ought to have  
 such a conversation as is most worthy  
 of belief, so as no oath should be re-  
 quired of him; and towards himself  
 and those of his party to preserve  
 such an even and equitable temper of  
 mind, as is a piece of voluntary Justice.  
 This and much more he discourses to  
 the same purpose.

For this and some other reasons, but  
 especially from some mis-taken places  
 of *Scripture*, where 'tis said, *swear not*  
*at all*; some of the Antient Fathers  
 held all taking of an oath *unlawful*; but  
 besides that those few that did,  
 were not herein *constant* to them-  
 selves, the far greatest part were of a-  
 nother mind, and understood the pro-  
 hibition either of swearing by *crea-*  
*tures* (which was the case of the *Jews*,  
 and which our *Saviour* and S. *James*  
 principally aim at) or of *light, rash,*  
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Part 3. and false swearing. For otherwise that the Primitive *Christians* did not think it unlawful to *take an oath* in serious and necessary cases, is most evident. *Athanasius* speaking of his accusers, whom he desired might be put to their oath, tells us, that the best way to attest the truth of what is spoken is to call God to witness; and this (*says he*) is the form of swearing which *we Christians* are wont to use. And indeed though we had no other argument, it would be plain enough from hence, that they served in the Wars, and frequently bore *arms* even under the Heathen Emperours, which 'tis evident they could not do without first taking a *military oath* to be true to their General, and to *die* rather than *desert* their station. And this, *Vegetius* an Heathen Author, though living in the time of the younger *Valentinian*, expressly reports of them, that when their names were entred upon the *Muster-roll*, they were wont to take an oath, the particular form whereof he there sets down, *viz.* That they swore by God, *Christ*, and the Holy Spirit, and the Majesty of the Emperour, which next to God is to be lov'd and honour'd by mankind:

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*Apolog. ad  
Constanti-  
um Imper.  
l. m. 1. p  
§ 28.*

*De remili-  
tar lib. 1. c.  
5 p. 33.*

This agrees very well with that account which *Tertullian* had long before given of the *Christians*, when being accus'd by their enemies of high Treason, amongst other reasons, because they refused to swear by their Emperours; he answers, that though they would not swear by the Emperours *genius*, their *genii* or tutelar deities being nothing else but *devils*, yet they did swear by the Emperours *safety*, a thing more august and venerable than all the *genii* in the World: In the Emperours they own God's Institution and Authority & would therefore have that to be safe, which he had appointed, and accordingly accounted it the matter of a lawful oath; but for the *demons* or *genii* (*says he*) we use *adjurare*, to adjure them, so as to cast them out of men; *non dejerare*, not to swear by them, and thereby confer the honour of *Divinity* upon them. For the same reason they denied to swear by the fortune of the Emperour, because amongst the Heathens she was accounted a deity, and honour'd with religious worship.

Thus we see that they refused not to ensure and ratifie their faith by the formality of an oath, to which that they might add the greater reverence

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Part 3.  
*Apolog. 32.  
p. 28.*

Part 3. and solemnity, they were wont many times to take it at the receiving of the *holy Sacrament*, as we find in the case of *Novatus* and his followers; for taking their hands wherein they held the Sacramental Elements within his own, he caused them to swear by the *body* and *blood* of our *Lord Jesus Christ* that they would not desert him. But because this may be thought to have been only the artifice of an *Heretick* to bind his followers the faster to his party; *S. Chrysostom* (though himself no good friend to taking oaths) sufficiently assures us 'twas customary to come into the Church and to swear upon the *Communion Table*, taking the Book of the *Holy Gospels* into their hands. The same appears from the case proposed to *Gregory Nazianzen* by *Theodore Bishop of Tyana*, and by the instance of *Eugrius, Nazianzen's Arch-deacon* at *Constantinople*, who had it reveal'd to him in a Vision that some persons lay in wait for him, and that therefore he must presently be gone; the person that revealed it assuring him he would knock off those fetters that were upon him, if he would swear to him upon the *Holy Gospels* that he would immediately

*Ensch. H.  
Eccl. lib. 6.  
c. 43. p.  
245.*

*Ad Pop.  
Antioch.  
Hom. 15.  
Tom. 1. p.  
178, 179.*

*Epist. 219.  
p. 908.  
Sozom. H.  
Eccl. lib. 6.  
c. 30. p.  
686. vid.  
Annst  
Hen. Vales.  
p. 145. co.  
2.*

mediately depart, which was accordingly done. And as their caution was great in *taking* of an oath, so their care was no less in *making* of it good; they knew that in this solemn transaction they did in a more peculiar manner call in God as a witness of what they said, and a revenger in case of falshood and the violation of it; this made them greatly afraid of *perjury*, which they looked upon as a sin of a deeper and more than ordinary dye; and one reason I conceive why some of the Antients were against all swearing (and *Clemens Alexandrinus* *ὁ μὲν ἐν* confirms me in it) was, because they would not come so much as within the danger or *possibility* of perjury. Such as have sworn rashly, or in unlawful cases, *S. Basil* earnestly exhorts to repentance, and that they would not persist in an obstinate defence of their impiety; and for such as are guilty of perjury he appointed that they should be suspended and banished the *Communion* for *eleven years* together.

The like severity, though not altogether so great, they used in case of *bearing false witness*: If any Christian falsely accused another before the Church

*οὐ μὲν ἐν  
μὴν δὲ ὁμ-  
ρὺς, πολ-  
λὰ γὰρ δὲ  
ἐπιτοκῆ-  
σαι. loc. su-  
pr. laudat.*

*Epist. Ca-  
non. ad  
Amphil.  
can. 29. p.  
31. tom. 3.  
Can. 64. p.  
36.*



Part 3. Church (for in those days they allowed no appeals to Heathen Tribunals) he was to be punished, *i. e.* suspended the Communion, the only punishment the Church in those days could inflict, according to the nature of the crime which he charged upon the other, according to the decree of the *Illiberine Council*; if he made good his charge, yet if he had concealed it a considerable time before he revealed it, he was to be suspended for *two years*; the reason probably being, because by this delay the criminal person had had opportunity to *infect* others, by propagating his vicious example to them. But that they might not set the door open and give encouragement to busie and malicious tempers, they ordain'd, that although the person should be really guilty of the crimes he was charged with, yet if the accuser did not sufficiently prove it *in conventu Clericorum* before the *Ecclesiastical Senate*, he should be punished with a *five years* suspension; and because then they had an honour and veneration for *Ministers* above all other men, they ordain'd, that whosoever should fallily accuse a *Clergy-man*, a *Bishop*, *Presbyter*,

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Conc. Illiber. Can.  
74. p. 79.  
ubi vid.  
not. Alasp.

Ibid. Can.  
75. p. 81.

or *Deacon* with any crime, which he Part 3.  
could not make good, should not be received into Communion even at the *hour of death*. The truth is, they were exceeding tender of any mans reputation, readier to add to it, than to detract from it, or to fasten any undue imputation upon him. *S. Basil* commending *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, has this of him amongst the rest; Out of regard (*says he*) to the threatening of our *Lord* he durst never call his *Brother fool*: no anger, wrath or bitterness proceeded out of his mouth: *Slandering* he hated as a quality greatly opposite to a state of salvation: *pride* and *envy* were strangers to that innocent and guileless soul: He never *approached the altar, till first reconciled to his brother*: All *false* and artificial speeches, and such as are cunningly contrived for the slander and detraction of others, he greatly abominated; well knowing, that every lie is the *spawn* and issue of the *devil*, and that God has threatened to *destroy all those that speak lies*. And so indeed he oftentimes does even in this world, not respiting such persons to the *tribunals* of the other world; whereof we meet with this

Ad Cleric.  
Eccles. Neo-  
casar. Ep.  
63. p. 95.  
tom. 3.

Part 3. this memorable example. *Narcissus* Euseb. H. Bishop of Jerusalem, a man of admirable piety and holiness of life, shined with so glorious a lustre in the place where he lived, that the brightness of his conversation offended the sore eyes of other men: Three more especially not able to bear the eminent strictness of his life, and being themselves guilty of very great enormities, thought to escape themselves by accusing him. Whereupon they laid a very hainous crime to his charge, and to beget the greater credit with them that heard it, solemnly ratified it with their oaths: The first imprecating upon himself that he might be *burnt*, if it were not true; the second, that his body might be *consumed* by some noysom and pestilent *disease*; the third, that he might lose his *sight*. The good man though notwithstanding all this he stood right in the thoughts of all true Christians, who knew his life to be too clear and unblameable to be *sullied* with the breath of such vile fellows, yet not being able to bear it, withdrew himself to an *Eremit's* life in the wilderness. But the *restless* eye of the divine vengeance quickly overtook these *perjured* wretches,

wretches, and caught them in their *own* snares; the first by a little spark that casually, and whereof no account could be given, happened in his house, was in the night *himself, family, and house* universally *burnt* to ashes; the second was from head to foot overrun and consumed by such a *disease* as he had wished upon himself; the third that *saw* all this, and feared the righteous and inevitable vengeance of God upon himself, *confessed* the whole plot and combination, and testified his repentance with so deep a sorrow, that with the multitude of his tears he lost his *sight*.

We have seen how exact the Christians were about their *words*, that they should be harmless and inoffensive, and the true conveyances of their minds; nor were they less careful about the conduct of their *actions*, whether of *distributive* or *commutative* Justice. For matters of *distributive* Justice, so far as it concerns a fair hearing, and impartial determining of trials and causes, rewarding the good, and punishing the bad, they had little opportunity to shew themselves; Christians in the first Ages being seldom invested

Part 3. vested with any external *Authority* and power, till the Empire submitted to *Christianity*, and then we find them executing their places with the most unbiassed uprightness and integrity. S. *Basil* speaking of an excellent person (though he names him not) who was sent to be Governour of *Neocæsarea* where he was Bishop, but presently undermin'd and outed by the accusations of some that could not bear his free and impartial carriage, and his temper so extremely opposite to flattery, says this of him, that he was a most rigid *observer* of Justice, courteous and easie of access to them that were *oppressed*, but his presence severe and terrible to the *injurious* and transgressours of the Law: He was the same to *rich* and *poor*, equally at leisure for both; of all men he exceedingly abhorr'd taking bribes, never favouring any beyond the Equity of his Cause; and which was above all, he was one that designed to reduce *Christianity* to its antient dignity and perfection. The same *Nazianzen* reports of his own *father*, and reckons it one of the excellent properties for which he accounted him a *Christian* even

*Ad Sa-  
pbron. Ma-  
gist. Epist.  
332. p.  
325.*

*In Laud.  
Patr. Orat.  
19. p. 290.*

even before he embrac'd *Christianity*, Part 3. that he so exactly observed justice himself, and so impartially administred it to others; that though he went through very great offices in the State, yet he made not one farthing's *addition* to his own revenue, though he saw some before his eyes, who with *Briareus* his hands laid hold upon the publick treasures, and therewith filled their own Coffers.

In matters of *Commutative* Justice, and ordinary transaction between man and man they observed the rule, *to deal with others, as they would be dealt with themselves*; they took no advantage of any mans *ignorance* or unskilfulness, so as to grasp that commodity at a far *under-rate*, of which they knew the *seller* did not understand the true price and value, and that if he did, he would not part with it at such a price. To this purpose S. *Augustine* tells us he knew a man (probably he means *himself*, though out of modesty he conceals it) who having a *Book* offered him to be sold by one that understood not the *price* of it, at a very small under-rate, took the Book, but gave him the *full* price according to its just rate and

*De Trinit.  
lib. 13. c. 3.  
tom. 3. col.  
407.*

Part 3. and value, which was a great deal more than the seller asked for it. And the truth is, in such cases advantage cannot honestly be taken of mens weakness or mistake, because no man if he understood the true worth and value of his commodity, can be supposed willing to part with it at a too-under rate. And if they were thus far from craftily *over-reaching*, much more from secretly or openly *invading* of what was anothers right and property; no cheating or couzenage, no acts of dishonesty and deceit were allowed or practised amongst them; or if any such were discovered they were immediately protested against by the whole Society of Christians. *Cornelius* Bishop of Rome, giving *Cyprian* an account of *Novatus* the Heretick and his companions, tells him of one *Nicostratus*, that not only cheated his *Lady* and *Patroness*, whose estate and revenues he managed, but carried away a great part of the treasures of the Church (whereof he was *Chief Deacon*) the portion and maintenance of poor Widows and Orphans (a crime, says he, reserved for perpetual punishment, *i. e.* for the judgement of God in the other world, being

*Epist 48. p.*  
*62. vid.*  
*Resp. Cyprian. Ep.*  
*sequent.*

too

too great for any in this) whereupon Part 3. he was forced to fly from *Rome* into *Africk* to avoid the shame and prosecution of his rapine and sacriledge; though when he came there, they did not only *refuse* to admit him into communion, but openly *exposed* the wickedness of him and his confederates to the abhorrency of all men. By which may appear the falsity of that charge of *Sacriledge* which the Gentiles brought against the Christians; to which, though certainly it primarily respected their declared enmity against the *Idolatrous Temples* and worship of the Heathens; yet *Tertullian* answers; You look upon us (*says he*) as *Sacrilegious* persons, and yet never found any of us guilty *Ad Scap. 2. p. 69.* of *wrong* or *injury*, of any *rapine* and *violence*, much less of *sacriledge* and *impiety*: No, they are your *own* party that swear by, and worship your gods, and yet *rob* their *temples*; that are no *Christians*, and yet are found to be *sacrilegious*: And afterwards, he adds this further vindication of them; As for us (*says he*) we deny not any *pledge* *ibid. c. 4. p. 71.* that's left with us, we *adulterate* no mans marriage-bed, we piously *educate* and train up Orphans, and relieve the

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necessities

Part 3. necessities of the indigent, and render no man evil for evil: If there be any that dissemble our Religion, let them look to't, we *disown* them for being of our party; why should we be worse thought of for others faults? or why should a Christian answer for any thing but what concerns his own Religion, which no man in so long a time has prov'd to be cruel or incestuous? Nay, when we are burnt, and most severely dealt with, 'tis for the greatest *Innocency, Honesty, Justice, Modesty*, for our *Truth and Faithfulness*, and our *Piety* to the Living God. And that these were not a parcel of good words which the *Christians* spoke in their own behalf, will appear, if we consider the testimony which *Pliny* (who was far from being partial to them) gives of them; for being commanded by the Emperour *Trajan* to give him an account of the *Christians*, he tells him, that after the strictest examination which he could make even of those that had renounc'd *Christianity*, he found this to be the greatest fault that they were guilty of, that they used harmlesly to meet to worship *Christ*, and at those meetings to bind themselves by a *Sacrament* [or an oath] that

Lib. 10.  
Ep. 97. p.  
290.

that they would not do any wickedness, that thy might be firmler obliged not to commit thefts, robberies, adulteries, not to falsify their words, or to deny any thing wherewith they were intrusted, when 'twas required of them.

*Gregory* Bishop of *Neocæsarea* in a Canonical Epistle, which he wrote to rectifie several disorders and irregularities which had happened amongst the *Christians* of those parts by reason of the inroads and devastations which the *Goths* and other barbarous nations had made amongst them, does amongst other things especially take notice, how uncomely in it self, how unsuitable to *Christians* it is to covet, and to grasp what is another mans; how inhumane, to spoyle the oppressed, and to enrich our selves by the blood and ruines of our miserable brethren: And whereas some might be apt to plead, they did not steal, but only take up what they found; He tells them, this excuse would not serve the turn, that whatever they had found of their Neighbours, nay though it were their enemies, they were bound to restore it, much more to their brethren, who were fellow-sufferers with them in the same condition.

Part 3. condition. Others thought it warrant enough, to keep what they found, though belonging to others, having been such deep *losers themselves*: but this he tells them is to *justify* one wickedness with another, and because the *Goths* had been enemies to them, they would become *Goths* and *Barbarians* unto others. Nor did they only keep themselves from doing *injuries* to others, they were ready to do them all the *right*, all the *kindness* that lay in their power, especially to vindicate the poor and helpless from the power and violence of those that were too mighty for them. Therefore when the Fathers of the *Synod of Sardis* took notice that some Bishops used to go to *Court* upon by-errands and private designs of their own, they ordain'd, that no *Bishop* should go to *Court*, unless either immediately summoned by the *Emperours* letters, or that their assistance was required to help the *oppressed*, to right *Widows* and *Orphans*, and to rescue them from the unjust grasps of potent and merciless oppressors; and that in these cases they should be ready (either by *themselves*, or some *deputed* by them) to present their petitions, to plead their cause,

Can. 7, 8.

cause, and to lend them all the assistance Part 3. they were able to afford.

I should not in this place have taken any notice how far the ancient Christians were from *murder*, and offering violence to any mans *life*, but that it was a common *charge* brought against them by the *Gentiles*, that they used to *kill* and *devour* an Infant at their *Christian* meetings, especially when any was first to be initiated into their assemblies; the story is thus dressed up by the acute Heathen in *M. Fælix*; An Infant being covered all over with meal, (the better to deceive the unwary) is set before him that is to be initiated and taken in; he ignorant of what it really is, is appointed to cut it up, which he effectually does by many secret and mortal wounds; whereupon they greedily lick up the blood, and ravenously tear off and snatch away the several parts of it; and with this sacrifice their confederacy and combination is made, and by the conscience of so great a villany they are mutually obliged to silence: Such sacred rites as these being more horrid and barbarous, than the highest sacrileges in the world. To this monstrous and horrid charge, the *Christians* returned

Min. Fæl.  
p. 8. vid.  
Tertull.  
Apol. c. 9.  
p. 9.

Part 3. these answers; That they appeal'd to the  
*Tert. Apol.* common *Faith* of mankind, whether  
*c 9. p. 8.* they could really believe them to be  
*M. Fœl p.* guilty of these things, so *abhorrent* to  
*93.* all the principles of Humane Nature,  
 and to the Christians *known* Principles  
 and practices in all other things; that  
 they should measure the *Christians* by  
 themselves, and if they themselves  
 could not be guilty of such things, they  
 should not suspect it by the *Christians*,  
 who were endued with the same Prin-  
 ciples of *humanity* with other men;  
 that they were so far from being friends  
 to *murder* or man-slaughter, that they  
 held it unlawful to be present at the  
*Athenag.* *Gladiatory sports*, where mens lives  
*l g. pro* were so wantonly sacrificed to the plea-  
*Christi in.* sure and curiosity of the people; that  
*p 28. B M* they accounted it murder for any wo-  
*Fœl. ibid.* man by evil arts to procure *abortion*,  
 to stifle the *embryo*, to *kill* a child in a  
*Athenag.* manner *before* it be alive, it being much  
*ib. v. Fœl.* at one to *hinder* life, as to *take* it away,  
*ib. Tert ib.* to kill a man, or destroy what *would*  
*p. 9.* be one, seeing he truly destroys the  
*M. Fœl p.* *fruit* that kills it in the *seed*; that it  
*26. Tertull.* was not likely they should delight in  
*ibid. p. 10.* *mans* blood, who never tasted any  
 blood at all, *abstaining from things*  
*strangled*

*strangled and from blood*: And that Part 3.  
 the very *Heathens* themselves confessed  
 this, when amongst the several *arts*  
 they used to discover whether men  
 were *Christians*, they used to offer them  
*bladders* full of *blood*, knowing that  
 they held it unlawful to *taste* any; and  
 therefore it was mightily improbable  
 they should thirst after *humane* blood,  
 who abhorred even the blood of *beasts*:  
 That they heartily believed the *Resur-*  
*Athenag.* *rection* of the dead, and therefore *ibid.*  
 would not make themselves the *sepul-*  
*chers* of those bodies which were to  
*rise* again, and feed upon them, as they  
 did upon other bodies which were to  
 have no resurrection: that the truth was,  
 if this charge was true of any, it was  
 true only of the *Gentiles* themselves,  
 amongst whom these things were daily  
*allowed* and *practised*: That *Saturn* one  
 of their chief deities did not only *ex-*  
*pose*, but *eat* his own children; to him  
 infants in *Africk* were offered in *sacri-*  
*fice* by their own parents, a custome  
 that openly continued till the Procon-  
 sul-ship of *Tiberius*, which though he  
 abolished it, yet it continued still in  
 corners in *Tertullians* days: To his Son *ibid.*  
*Jupiter* they offered *humane* sacrifices  
 P 4 even

Part 3. even in *Rome* it self, and that even to the time of *M. Felix* as he himself testifies; which is no more than what *Porphiry* himself (after he had reckoned up in how many parts of the world *Humane* sacrifices were in use) confesses was done at *Rome* in the Feast of *Jupiter Latialis* even in his time. Many other instances of such barbarous practices are there produced by those two *Apologists*, which they urge with great advantage upon their adversaries, whom they challenged to make any such thing good against them.

And no sooner did discipline begin to be regularly settled, but their principles herein were every where confirmed by the *Canons* of the Church, either private or publick; the woman that industriously made her self miscarry was adjudged to be guilty of murder, and condemn'd to the same punishment, a *ten years penance*; which was adjudg'd to be the case of any that brought forth upon the way, and exposed her Infant. By the law of the State, made by the Emperour *Valentinian*, whosoever, whether man or woman, kill'd an *Infant*, was to be subject to the same capital punishment, as if he had

*Basil. Ep.*  
*Can. Con.*  
*2. p. 22.*  
*76 Can 33.*  
*p. 22.*  
*God. Thend*  
*lib. 9. Tit*  
*74. l. 1.*

had kill'd an *adult* person, which may very well be understood even of *Infants* kill'd in the womb, the punishment whereof was formerly for the most part no more than *banishment*. He that was guilty of wilful murder was by *S. Basil's* rule to undergo a *twenty years penance* before he was admitted to the Sacrament; though by several passages in *Tertullian* it appears that *Homicides* in his time were more severely treated by the Church, for they were not only bound to a perpetual penance; but were not *absolv'd* at death. But this severity shortly after began to relax, and such persons though obliged to acts of repentance all their life, yet at death were absolved, and admitted to Communion, as is expressly provided by the decree of the *Ancyran Council*.

*Can. 22.*

Thus clear did the Christians all along stand from any just suspicion of that gross piece of *inhumanity* which their enemies so confidently charged upon them. As for the *rise* and occasion of this malicious charge, it was doubtless of the same growth with that of their *incestuous mixtures*. (spoken of before) both springing from the abominable practices of some *filthy* Heretics,

Part 3.  
*Can. 36.*  
*p. 36.*



Part 3. ticks, who sheltred themselves under the *name* of Christians, *Epiphanius* particularly reporting of the *Gnosticks*, what the *Heathens* generally charged upon the Christians; for he tells us of them, that at their meetings they were wont to take an *Infant* begotten in their *promiscuous* mixtures, and beating it in a *mortar*, to season it with *honey* and *pepper*, and some other spices and perfumes, to make it *palatable*, and then like *swine* or *dogs* to devour it; and then to conclude all with prayer; and this they accounted their *perfect pass-over*. I am not ignorant that a learned man will by no means believe that any of the ancient *Hereticks* did ever arrive to so much *barbarousness* and immanity, as to be guilty of such things, and conceives them to have been *feigned* meerly out of hatred to those pestilent hereticks; but there's little reason to suspect the truth of it, *Epiphanius* assuring us, that he had the account that he gives, from the mouths of the *Gnosticks* themselves; and that many of the *women* who were deceiv'd into those abominable errours did not only discover these things to him, but that he himself in his younger years while

*Heres. 26.*  
*p. 43. vid.*  
*de Phryg.*  
*seu Quin-*  
*tilian.*  
*Heres. 48.*  
*p. 181. de*  
*Montani-*  
*stis Zou. &*  
*Balsam. in*  
*Can. 7.*  
*Conc. Con-*  
*stant.*  
*Desid. He-*  
*vald. Not.*  
*ad Min.*  
*Fel. p. 76.*

*vid. p. 48.*

while he was in *Egypt* had been assault-Part 3.  
 ed by them, and by all the arts of flattery and perswasion, of wantonness and immdesty had been set upon to joyn himself to them. And certainly 'tis not imaginable that a person so venerable for learning and piety as *Epiphanius* was, should impose upon us by feigning so gross and notorious a falshood. Besides, whoever reads *Irenæus*, in whose time these heresies were most rise and predominant, and considers the account that he gives of them, which he mainly received from persons of their own party after they were returned back to the Church, will see little reason either to think any wickedness *too great* for them to boggle at, or to doubt of the truth of what he reports concerning them.

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CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

Of their admirable Love and  
Charity.

*The excellent temper of the Christian Religion. The Gospel principally enjoyns kindness and charity. The Primitive Christians eminently of this spirit. They accounted all brethren, but Christians more especially. Their mutual love noted and recorded by their enemies. Their mighty zeal and charity for the souls of men, to recover them from vice and error to truth and virtue. This the matter of their daily prayer, and most serious endeavours, even towards their greatest enemies. Pamphilus his charity in bestowing Bibles freely upon the poor. Preachers maintained for converting the Gentile Phenicians to Christianity. The famous story of S. John's hazarding himself for the regaining a young man debauched by bad companions. Monica's care and sollicitude about S. Augustin. Some that have sold themselves for slaves, that they might convert their Heathen or Heretical Masters. Christians*

*Part 3.*  
*stians not shy of communicating the knowledge of their Religion. Their Charity as it respected the necessities of the outward life. This noted in several instances of charity. Their liberal providing for the poor. The bounty of particular persons. Divers instances of it. The immense charity of Epiphanius: exemplary vengeance upon some that abused it. The poor accounted the Treasure and Ornaments of the Church: represented in the case of Laurentius the Deacon, and a story related by Palladius. Their visiting and assisting the sick in their own persons: eminently noted in the Empress Placilla, and the Lady Fabiola. The Christians care of their brethren in a great plague at Alexandria. Persons appointed on purpose to cure and attend the sick. The Parabolani, who. Their office and number. Redemption of Captives. Great sums contributed by Cyprian and his people for it. Church-plate sold to redeem Christians, nay, captiv'd enemies. Christians embodaging themselves to redeem others. The strange charity of Paulinus Bishop of Nola, making himself a slave to ransom a poor widows son. Their care about*

*about the bodies of the dead. Decent burial very fit and desirable. A piece of piety remarkable in the Christians of those times. Their abstaining from the common custome of burning the dead as barbarous. The great cost they laid out upon their funerals, in embalming, intombing, &c. The Copiatæ, who : What their office and order. The Decani or Deans in the Church of Constantinople ; their number, and duty. Their providing fit places of Sepulture. Their Cœmeteria or burying-places in the fields. Burying in Cities and Churches when brought in, and to whom first granted. Their Cœmeteria under ground. What kind of places they were. The great number and vast capacities of them. A particular account of one out of Baronius, discovered in his time. How the Christians were enabled to all these acts of charity. At first all in common : after, by usual contributions. The standing stock or treasury of the Church. This charity of Christians largely attested by Julian and Lucian. Their love and charity universal. Doing good to enemies. An excellency proper to Christians. This manifested in several remarkable*

*makable instances. Plainly acknowledged by Julian himself. The whole sum'd up in an elegant discourse of Lactantius concerning mercy and charity.*

**T**hat the *Christian* Religion was immediately designed to improve and perfect the principles of humane nature, appears as from many other instances of it, so especially from this, that it so strictly enjoyns, cherishes and promotes that natural *kindness* and compassion, which is one of the prime and essential inclinations of mankind; wherever the Gospel is cordially complied with, it begets such a sweet and gracious temper of mind as makes us humble, affable, courteous and charitable, ready and disposed to every *good work*, prompt to all offices of humanity and kindness, it *files* off the ruggedness of mens natures, banishes a rude, churlish and *pharisaical* temper, and infuses a more calm and treatable disposition. It commands us *to live and love as brethren, to love without hypocrisie, to have fervent charity amongst our selves, and to be kindly affectioned one towards another* : It lays the sum of our duty toward others in this, *to love our neighbour*

Part 3. *neighbour as our selves.* This our *Saviour* seems to own as his proper and peculiar law, and has ratified it with his own solemn sanction, *A new Commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another;* and then makes this the great visible badge of all those who are truly Christians, *by this shall all men know that you are my Disciples, if you have love one to another.*

And so indeed it was in those first and best ages of Religion, for no sooner did the Gospel fly abroad into the world, but the love and charity of Christians became notorious even to a *Proverb*, the Heathens taking notice of the Christians of those times with this particular remark, *See how these Christians love one another.* They were then united in the most happy *fraternity* (a word much used by *Christians* in those days, and objected against them by the Heathens) they liv'd as *brethren*, and accounted themselves such, not only as being sprung from one common Parent. (for in this respect that they had Nature for their common Mother, they acknowledged the very Heathens to be brethren, though other-

Tertul. Ap.  
c. 39. p. 31.

Id. ibid. M.  
Fel. p. 26.

wife

wife little deserving the name of *men*) Part 3. but upon much higher accounts, *viz.* that they had one and the same God for their Father, drank all of the same spirit of holiness, were brought out of the same womb of darkness and ignorance into the same light of truth, that they were partakers of the same Faith, and co-heirs of the same hope. This *Lucian* himself confesses of them, and that it was one of the great Principles that their Master instilled into them, that they should all become *Brethren*, after once they had thrown off the Religion of the *Gentiles*, and had embraced the worship of their great crucified Master, and given up themselves to live according to his Laws. The truth is, so ready, intire, and constant was their kindness and familiarity, that the Heathens accused them for having *privy* marks upon their bodies, whereby they fell in love with each other at first sight. Indeed they never met, but they embraced one another with all the demonstrations of a hearty and sincere affection, saluting each other with *holy kisses*, not only in their own houses, but at their Religious Assemblies, as a badge and bond of that Christian fel-

De mort.  
Peregrin.  
p. 754.  
tom. 2.

M. Fel. 13.  
& p. 7.

Q lowship

Part 3. lowship and communion that was maintained amongst them.

But the love and kindness of those *Christians* of old did not lie only in a smooth complemental carriage, or in a parcel of good words, *depart in peace, be you warm'd or fill'd*, but in the real exercises of charity and mercy. Now because the two great objects of *Charity* are, the good of mens *souls*, and their outward and *bodily* welfare and happiness, we shall find that the *Primitive Christians* were highly eminent and exemplary for both these. The soul being of a much higher and nobler nature, and consequently infinitely more precious and valuable than the body, they were accordingly infinitely careful and solicitous to save mens souls, *to recover them out of the snare of the Devil*, and the paths of ruine, by making them *Christians*, and bringing them over to the *knowledge of the truth*; for this they pray'd daily and earnestly.

We *Christians* (says *Cyprian* to the *Pro-consul*) serve the one and true God that made Heaven and earth, and pray to him night and day, not only for our selves, but for all men, and for the safety of the Emperours themselves. From  
this

*Passio Cyprian. vit. ejus annexa p. 17.*

this no injuries or unkindnesses could Part 3. discourage them. *Justin Martyr* tells the *Jew*, that they pray'd for them, and all others that unjustly were their enemies, that, repenting of their wickednesses, and ceasing to *blaspheme Christ Jesus*, who by the greatness of his works, the uncontrollableness of the miracles performed in his name, the excellency of his doctrines, and the clearness of the prophecies fulfilled in him, appeared to be altogether innocent and unblameable, and that rather believing in him, they might together with *Christians* be saved by him at his second glorious coming, and not be condemned by him to everlasting flames. We pray for you (*says he*) that *Christ* would have mercy upon you, for he has taught us to *Pray for our enemies*, to love them and be *merciful* to them. And afterwards, when he had reckoned up all those wicked and malicious artifices which the *Jews* had used both against *Christ* and *Christians*, yet notwithstanding all this (*says he*) we are so far from hating either you, or those who at your suggestion believe these things of us, that we *pray* that all of you may repent, and obtain mercy from God, the gra-

*Dial cum Typh. p. 254.*

*ib. p. 323.*

*ib. p. 333.*

Part 3. cious and compassionate Parent of the world. The *Gnosticks* were the greatest scandal that ever was to *Christianity*, and the occasion of many of those persecutions, and most of those horrible calumnies which the Heathens brought upon the Christians, and yet see how *Irenæus* treats them; We pray for them (*says he*) and beg of them not to continue in the pit which they have digged to themselves, but to depart from their sottish and idle vanities, to turn to the Church of God, that *Christ* may be formed in them, and that they may know the only true God, the Creatour of the world: This we beg of them, loving them to better purpose, than they think they love themselves: for our love is true and wholesome (if they will receive it) like a sharp plaister indeed, but it will eat away the proud flesh, take down the swelling and vanity of their minds, for which cause we will not cease by all means to apply it to them. The same *Origen* tells *Celsus*, that though both *Jews* and *Gentiles* turn'd their backs upon the doctrine of *Christ*, and charged them for being *Impostors* and deceivers, yet they would not give over thus *honestly* to deceive

Adv. Hæ-  
res lib. 3. c.  
46. p. 314.

Lib. 2. p.  
110.

deceive men, to make them of loose Part 3. persons to become sober and temperate, or to bring them on towards it; of dishonest to make them righteous, of unwise to make them prudent, at least to bring them into the way to these things; of fearful and timorous to render them hearty and couragious, especially as oft as they are to contend for their Religion and Piety towards God. How earnestly and passionately does *Cyprian* beg of the Proconsul *Deme-* Ad Deme-  
*trian* and the *Gentiles* to provide for *trian. p.*  
their happiness and safety, to accept of <sup>204.</sup> the counsels and assistance which the *Christians* offered, who loved them not the worse for all the torments and sufferings they laid upon them; that they returned kindness for hatred, and by the miseries they endured shewed to them the way to Heaven; that now was the time to make their peace with God, and to secure salvation; that there was *no place for repentance* on t'other side the grave, the *stations* of the other world being fix'd and unchangeable; that therefore they should believe and live, that so they might eternally rejoyce with them, whom they did now so afflict and persecute.

## 246. Primitive Christianity. Ch. 2.

Part 3. In pursuance of this design they spared neither *pains* nor *cost*, that they might instruct men in the way to Heaven. 'Tis said of *Pamphilus* the *Martyr*, that amongst other instances of his charity, he used freely and readily to bestow *Bibles* upon all that were willing to read; for which purpose he had alwayes great numbers of those holy volumes by him, that as occasion serv'd, he might distribute and bestow them: By this means mercifully furnishing those with these divine treasures, whose purses could not otherwise reach to the price of the *Scriptures*, far dearer in those dayes, than they are since *Printing* came into the world. We find *S. Chrysostome* so zealous for converting the *Gentiles* to *Christianity*, that for this very end he maintained many *Presbyters* and *Monks* in *Phœnicia* partly at his own charge, and partly by the assistance of pious and well-disposed persons, whose only work it was to *Catechise* and instruct the *Heathens* in the Principles of the *Christian* Faith; and that the business might succeed more effectually, he procured a law from the Emperor *Arcadius* (yet extant in the *Theodosian Code*) directed to *Eutychian*,

*Hier. adv. Ruffin tom. 2. p. 199. ex Euseb.*

*Theodoret. H. Eccl. lib. 5. c. 29. p. 829.*

*Lib. 16 Tit. 10. de Pag. Sacrif. 15. Temp. l. 17.*

## Ch. 2. Primitive Christianity. 247

*Eutychian*, *Presb't* of the *East*, that the Pagan *Temples* should be orderly taken down, that so they being destroyed, the whole matter of the *Gentile* superstition might be abolished. Upon the executing of which Law great mutinies were raised by the Country people, many of the *Monks* wounded, and some slain, and the rest wholly disheartned to proceed in the business, (these doubtless being those very *Monks* against whom *Libanius* so severely declaims for so mercilessly destroying the Pagan *Temples*;) Whereupon *Chrysostome* (who who then in banishment) writes to them to bear up with a Christian and invincible patience, encourages them resolutely to go on in so good a work; tells them that God would not be wanting to stand by them, and to reward them in this and the other life, and promises them (though his *incomes* at this time were very small) that their former pensions should be paid them, and all things necessary provided for them. And indeed with how much care and solicitude the good mans mind was filled about this business, he sufficiently intimates in a letter written to another person whom he had employed

*Orat. de Templis. p. 10. Epist. 123. tom. 4. p. 756.*

*Ad Ruffin. Presbyt. Ep. 126. p. 763.*

Part 3. employed about this affair. Nor did they in those times regard *ease* or *safety* any more than they did. cost and charges in this matter, exposing themselves to any dangers that they might do good to the souls of men.

It might easily shew that this consideration had a great influence upon the sufferings of the Primitive Martyrs, willingly running any hazards, cheerfully enduring any miseries, that they might gain others to the faith, and prevent their eternal ruine. But that famous story of S. John the Apostle shall serve instead of many, the sum of which is this; Coming to a place near *Ephesus* in his visitation of the Churches, he espied a *Youth* of a comely shape and pregnant parts, and taking hold of him delivered him to the *Bishop* of the place with this charge (which he repeated once and again) *I commend this person to thee to be looked to with all care and diligence, and that in the presence of Christ and the Church.* The Bishop undertook the charge, received the young man into his house, instructed him, and at last *baptized* him. Which being done, he thought he might remit a little of the strictness of his care; but

Ench. H.  
Ecc. 13 3.  
6.23 P 9.

but the young man making an ill use of Part 3. his liberty, fell into bad company, by whose arts and snares he was seduced into ways of riot and wickedness; till despairing of all hope of pardon from God, he let loose the reins to all manner of exorbitancy, and agreeing with his confederates, they combin'd themselves into a society of highway-men, and made him their *Captain*, who quickly became as far beyond the rest in fierceness and cruelty, as he was in power and authority. S. John upon occasion returning some while after to the same place, after he had dispatched his other business, required from the Bishop the *pledge* he had left with him; who wondring and not knowing what he meant; *I mean* (said S. John) *the young man, 'tis the soul of my brother that I require.* The old man with a dejected look and tears in his eyes, answered, *he's dead*; and being demanded by what kind of death, answered, *he's dead to God*; for alas! he's become a *villain*, and instead of the Church is fled with his companions to the mountains to be a thief and a robber. The Apostle renting his cloaths, and bewailing that he had so ill be-  
trusted



Part 3. trusted his brother's soul, immediately call'd for a horse and a guide, and made haste to the Mountains; where being taken by those that stood *Sentinel*, he beg'd to be brought before their *Captain*, who stood ready arm'd some way off; but as soon as he perceived 'twas *S. John* that was coming towards him, he began to be ashamed & to run as fast as he could. The Apostle not regarding his own age and weakness followed after with all his might; and when his legs could not overtake him, he sent these passionate exclamations after him; *Why, O my Son, dost thou fly from thy aged and unarmed father? take pity of me, and fear not, there is yet hope of salvation for thee. I will undertake with Christ for thee; if need be, I will freely undergo death for thee, as our Lord did for us, and lay down my own life to ransom thine; only stay and believe me, for I am sent by Christ.* With that he stay'd, and with a dejected look throwing away his Arms, he trembled, and dissolved into tears; he embraced the aged *Apostle* with all possible expressions of sorrow and lamentation, as if again *baptized* with his own tears. *S. John* assured him he had obtain'd his pardon

pardon of *Christ*, and having fasted Part 3. and prayed with him and for him, and with all the arts of consolation refresh'd his shattered and disconsolate mind, brought him into, and restored him to the Church.

This story though somewhat long, I was the willinger to produce, both because so remarkable in it self, and so great a testimony of that mighty *tenderness* and compassion which they had for the souls of men; for whose sake they thought they could never *do*, never *venture* far enough. *S. Augustine* Confess. lib. 9. c. 9. p. 155. rom. tells us what infinite pains his Mother *Monica* took about the conversion of her husband *Patricius*, how unweariedly she sought to endear her self to him, by all the arts of a meek, prudent and sober carriage, how submissively she complied with his rigorous and untoward humours, how diligently she watched the aptest times of insinuation, never leaving till at last she gained him over to the faith. Nor was her care and solicitude less for her Son *Augustine*, who being hurried away with the lewdnesses of youth, and intangled with the impieties of the *Manichean* Heresie, was the hourly subject

Part 3. ject of her prayers and tears; She plyed him with daily counsels and intreaties, implored the help and assistances of good men, and importuned heaven for the success of all; not being able to gain any quiet to her mind, till S. Ambrose (with whom she had oft advised about it) sent her away with this assurance, *that it was not possible that a child of so many tears should perish*. No sooner was his conversion wrought, but her spirit was at ease, and she now desired no more. Himself tells us, that discoursing with her alone some few days before her death concerning the state of the blessed and the joys of heaven, she at last broke off with this farewell: *For my part, Son, I have now no further hopes or pleasures in this world; there was but one thing for which I desired to live, that I might see thee a Catholick Christian before I died: This my good God has abundantly blessed me with, having let me see thee despising the felicities of this life, and entered into his family and service; so that what do I make any longer here?* Nay, so great a zeal had they for the good of souls in those days, that many did not stick to engage themselves in temporal slavery for no other

*Ibid. cap.*  
10.

other end but to deliver others from Part 3. spiritual bondage. Thus Serapion called *Sindonites* (because he never wore more than one poor Linnen garment) *Pallad. Hist. Laus. c. 83. in vir. Serap. p. 182.* one of the Primitive *Asceticks*, sold himself to a *Gentile-player* that served the Theatre; with whom he liv'd & underwent the meanest offices, till he had converted him, his wife and whole family to Christianity, who upon their baptism restored him to his liberty, whereupon he freely returned them back the *mony* which he had receiv'd as the price of his servitude, which by mutual consent was given to the poor. Coming afterwards to *Lacedæmon* and hearing that a principal person of the City, a very good man otherwise, was infected with the *Manichean* Heresie; one of the first things he did, was to insinuate himself into his Family, selling himself to be his slave; in which condition he remained for two years together, till he had brought his Master and his whole Family off from that pernicious Heresie, and restored them to the Church; who did not only bless God for it, but treated him not as a *servant*, but with that kindness and reverence that is due to a *Brother* and a *Father*.

This

Part 3. This was the good spirit and *genius* of those days, they intirely studied and designed the happiness of men, were willing and desirous freely to impart the treasures of the Gospel, and wished that in that respect all mankind were as rich and happy as themselves. So far were they from that malicious imputation which *Celsus* fastned upon them, that if all men would become *Christians*, they would not admit it; to which *Origen* flatly returns the *lie*; and tells him the falseness of it might appear from this, that *Christians* as much as in them lay were not backward to propagate their doctrine through the whole world; and that some of them had peculiarly undertaken to go up and down not only in Cities, but in Towns and Villages, to bring over others to the true Religion: and that they did not this out of any designs of *gain* or interest to themselves was plain, because they often refus'd to receive *necessary* accommodations from others; or if they did, they were such only as were barely and absolutely necessary for the present turn, when as far greater liberalities have been offered to them. Nay, so me

*Orig. cont.  
Cels. lib. 3.  
p. 116.*

some of the antient *Canons* expressly require, that no man, who has either *Hereticks* or *Infidels* in his Family, shall be admitted to the order either of *Bishop*, *Presbyter* or *Deacon*, who has not first converted those persons to the true Christian faith.

Having seen what kindness and charity they expressed to mens *souls*, we come next to that which respected their *bodies*, and the necessities of the outward life; this they shewed in several instances, we shall consider some of the most material. In the first place they took special care to provide for the *poor*, and such as were unable to help themselves; this *Cyprian* in his retirement gave especially in charge to the *Presbyters* and *Deacons* of his Church, that by all means they should mind the poor, and furnish them with whatever was necessary for them. *Dionysius* Bishop of *Corinth* testifies of the Church of *Rome* that they did not only eminently provide for their own poor, but with great liberality administer to the necessities of other Churches, plentifully relieving whatever indigent brethren came to them, or where-ever they were, though at the greatest

Part 3.  
*Concil.  
Carth. 3.  
Can. 18.*

*Epist. 5. p.  
13.*

*Euseb. H.  
Ecc. lib. 4.  
c. 23. p.  
145.*

Part 3. greatest distance from them. And of  
*Homil. 67.* the Church of *Antioch Chrysostom* tells  
*in Matth.* us, that in his time, though the revenues  
*p. 586.* of it were but small, yet besides its  
*Clergy*, besides *strangers*, *lepers*, and  
 such as were in *bonds*, it daily main-  
 tain'd above *three thousand* Widows  
 and Maids. Indeed the bounty of  
 those times was almost incredible. S.  
*Vic. ejus per* *Cyprian* upon his turning Christian sold  
*Paul. Diac.* his estate to relieve the wants of others.  
*p. 11, 12.* and could not be restrained from it ei-  
 ther by the persuasions of others, or  
 the considerations of what he might  
 be reduced to himself. After his en-  
 trance upon the Ministry his doors  
 were open to all that came, from whom  
 no Widow ever returned empty; to  
 any that were blind, he would be their  
 guide to direct them; them that were  
 lame, he was ready to lend his assistance  
 to support them; none were oppress'd  
 by might, but he was ready to defend  
 them. *Cæsarius*, S. *Basil's* brother,  
*Basil. ad* made only this short *will* when he died,  
*Sophron.* *I will that all my estate be given to the*  
*Ep. 84. p.* *poor.* *Nazianzen* reports of his Father,  
*156. tom. 3.* that he was so kind to the poor, that  
*Orat. 19. p.* he did not only bestow the *surplusage*  
*298.* of his estate upon them, but even part  
 of

of what was reserv'd for *necessary* uses; Part 3.  
 of his Mother, that an Ocean of wealth *Ibid. p.*  
 would not have fill'd her unsatisfied *299.*  
 desire of doing good, and that he had  
 often heard her say, that if it were  
 lawful, she could willingly have sold  
 her *self* and *children*, to have expend-  
 ed the price upon the uses of the poor;  
 and of his Sister *Gorgonia*, that she was  
 immensely liberal, *Job-like* her gate  
 was open to every stranger, she was  
 eyes to the *blind*, feet to the *lame*, and  
 a mother to *orphans*; her estate was as  
 common to the poor, and as much at  
 their need, as every ones is to himself,  
 dispersing and scattering abroad, and  
 according to the counsel of our *Savi-*  
*our*, *laying up her treasure in heaven.*

They gave not only *according to*;  
 but *beyond* their ability; trusting to  
 the goodness and fidelity of heaven to  
 supply what *wanted*, which many times  
 made the return with overplus by  
 ways uncommon and extraordinary.  
*Sozomen* relates of *Epiphanius* Bishop *H. Eccl. lib.*  
 of *Salamine* in *Cyprus*, that having *7. c. 27. p.*  
 spent all his own estate in pious and *749.*  
 charitable uses, in relieving the needy,  
 and such as were by shipwrack and the  
 mercy of the sea cast upon the coast,  
 R he

Part 3. he freely dispensed and distributed the goods and treasures of his Church (which by the bounty of charitable persons from all parts, who thought they could not better lodge their estates than in the hands of so good a man, was very rich and wealthy) and that with so liberal a hand, that the *Steward* or Guardian of the Church finding its stock begin to grow very low, with some resentment told him of it, charging him as too profuse and open-handed; All which notwithstanding he remitted nothing of his accustomed bounty to the poor. At length all being spent, a *stranger* on a suddain comes into the Stewards lodgings, and delivers into his hand a great *purse of gold*, without any discovery either who 'twas that *brought* it, or who 'twas that *sent* it. And indeed so vast and universal was the charity of this good man, that it sometimes made him liable to be *imposed* upon by crafty and designing persons, whereof the *Historian* in the same place gives this remarkable instance. A couple of beggars meeting *Epiphanus*, and knowing the charitableness of his temper, to draw the greater alms from him, agreed

greed to put this trick upon him. One of Part 3. them lies along upon the ground, feigning himself to be dead, the other standing by him passionately bewailed the death of his companion, and his own poverty, not able to give him burial. *Epiphanus* pitied the man, perswaded him to bear his loss patiently, and not to expect that his companion should in this world rise any more, bid him take care for his burial, and withal gave him what was sufficient for it. No sooner was he gone out of sight, but the beggar comes to his companion, jogs him with his foot, and commends him for so ingeniously acting the cheat: *Rise* (said he) *and with what we have got let's be merry and jolly to day.* But alas! the *Comedy* was turned into a *tragic scene*; the man was really dead, and could not be recovered by all his cries or stirring; which his companion no sooner perceived, but with all haste makes after the *Bishop*, cries and tears his hair, confesses the cheat, and begs that his companion might be restored to life; but all in vain: the Bishop bids him be content, and tells him that God would not undo what he had done.

*Leaving a fair warning to men* (says the

Part 3. *Historian*) that the great God who sees and hears all things, reckons those wicked-  
eries that are put upon his servants as if done to himself. But this only upon occasion of that great charity which they then upon all occasions extended to the poor. The truth is, they then looked upon the poor as the *treasure* and *ornament* of the Church, by whom as by *bills of Exchange* they returned their estates into the other world. When

49. Lav-  
v. 1. apud  
Sunt ad  
Anon. 1.  
Aug. 1. 1.  
4. 1. 1. 1.  
br. Op. 1. 1.  
2. 1. 1. 1.  
Em. 1.

*Decius* the *Emperour* demanded of *Laurentius* the *Deacon* of the Church of *Rome* the Churches treasures, he promised after three days to produce them; in which time having gathered together the *blind* and the *lame*, the *infirm* and the *maim*, at the time appointed he brought them into the Palace, and when the *Emperour* asked for the *treasures* he had promised to bring with him, he shews him his company, *Behold* (said he) *these are the treasures of the Church, those eternal treasures, which are never diminished, but increase; which are dispersed to every one, and yet found in all.* This passage brings to my mind (though it more properly belongs to the next instance of *charity*)

*Hist. Laus.* what *Palladius* relates of *Macarius*, a  
c. 6 p. 22. *Presbyter*

*Presbyter* and Governour of the *Hospital* at *Alexandria*; There was a Virgin in that City very rich, but infinitely covetous and uncharitable: She had been oft attempted and set upon by the persuasions of good men, but in vain; at last he caught her by this piece of *pious* policy. He comes to her, and tells her that a parcel of *Jewels*, *Emraulds* and *Jacinths*, of incestimable value, were lodg'd at his house, but which the owner was willing to part with for five hundred pieces of mony, and advises her to buy them: She catching at the offer, as hoping to gain considerably by the bargain, delivered him the mony, and intreated him to buy them for her, knowing him to be a person of great piety and integrity. But hearing nothing from him a long time after, till meeting him in the Church, she asked him what were become of the *Jewels*: He told her he had laid out the mony upon them (for he had expended it upon the uses of the *Hospital*) and desired her to come and see them, and if the purchase did not please her, she might refuse it. She readily came along with him to the *Hospital*, in the upper rooms whereof

Part 2. the *women* were lodged; in the lower the *men*. He asked her which she would see first, the *Jacinths*, or the *Em-raulds*; which she leaving to him, he brought her first into the upper part, where the *lame*, *blind*, and *Cripple-women* were disposed, and *see*, said he, *the Jacinths that I spoke of*: Then carrying her down into the lower rooms he shewed her the *men* in the like condition, and told her, *These are the Em-raulds that I promised, and Jewels more precious than these I think are not to be found*; and now, said he, *if you like not your bargain, take your money back again*. The woman blushed, and was troubled to think, she should be hal'd to that, which she ought to have done freely for the love of God. Afterwards she heartily thanked *Macarius*, and betook her self to a more charitable and Christian course of life.

Next to this, their charity appeared in *visiting* and *assisting* of the *sick*; contributing to their necessities, refreshing their tired bodies, curing their wounds or sores with their own hands.

Epist. ad  
Zen. & Se-  
ren. p. 514.

The sick (says the antient Authour of the Epistle in *Justin Martyr*, if it be not *Justin* himself) are not to be neglected;

lected; nor is it enough for any to say, Part 3. I have never learnt to *serve* and give attendance: For he that shall make his delicacy or tenderness unaecustomed to any hardness to be an excuse in this case, let him know it may soon be his own; and then he'll quickly discern the unreasonableness of his own judgment, when the same shall happen to him, that he himself has done to others. But there were no such nice and squeamish stomachs in the good *Christians* of those times. S. *Hierom* tells us of *Fabiola* a Roman Lady, a woman of considerable birth and fortunes, that she sold her estate, and dedicated the money to the uses of the poor; she built an Hospital (and was the *first* that did so) wherein she maintained and cured the infirm and miserable, or any sick that she met withal in the streets; here was a whole *randevouz* of Cripples, hundreds of diseases and destempers here met together, and her self at hand to attend them: sometimes carrying the diseased in her arms, or bearing them on her shoulders; sometimes washing and dressing those filthy and noysome sores, from which another woud have turn-

Epitaph:  
Fabiola ad  
Ocean. p.  
199. tom.

Part 3. ed his eyes with contempt and hor-  
 rour; otherwiles preparing them food,  
 or giving them physick with her own  
 hand. The like we read of *Placilla*

*Theodor. H. the Empress*, wife to the younger *Theodo-*  
*Eccel. lib. 5.*  
*c. 18 p. 160.* *sius*, that she was wont to take all possi-  
 ble care of the lame or wounded, to go

home to their houses, carry them all  
 necessary conveniencies, and to attend,  
 and assist them not by the ministry of  
 her servants and followers, but with  
 her own hands. She constantly visited  
 the common *Hospitals*, attended at sick  
 beds for their cure and recovery, tasted  
 their broths, prepared their bread,  
 reached them their provisions, washed  
 their cups with her own hands, and  
 underwent all other offices which the  
 very meanest of the servants were to  
 undergo. Thus also the *Historian* re-  
 ports of *Deogratias* the aged Bishop of  
*Carthage* under the *Vandalic* persecuti-  
 on, that having sold all the plate be-  
 longing to the Church to ransom the  
 Captive *Christians*, and wanting places  
 conveniently to bestow them, he lodg-  
 ed them in two large Churches, pro-  
 vided for the needy, took care of the  
 sick, himself every hour visiting them  
 both by day and night, with Physi-  
 ans

*Vid. Uric.*  
*de persec.*  
*Vandal*  
*lib. 1. fol.*  
*5. p. 2.*

ans attending him to superintend their Part. 3.  
 cure, and diet suitable to their several  
 cases, going from bed to bed to know  
 what every one stood in need of. Nay,  
 how often did they venture to relieve  
 their brethren when labouring under  
 such distempers as seemed immediately  
 to breath death in their faces? Thus in  
 that sad and terrible plague at *Alex-*  
*andria*, which though it principally *Enseb. H.*  
 raged amongst the *Gentiles*, yet seiz'd *Eccel. lib. 7.*  
 also upon the *Christians*, Many of *c. 22. p.*  
 the bretheren (says the *Historian*) out *269.*  
 of the excessive abundance of their  
 kindness and charity, without any re-  
 gard to their own health and life, bold-  
 ly ventured into the thickest dangers,  
 daily visiting, attending, instructing,  
 and comforting their sick and infected  
 brethren, till themselves expired and  
 died with them: Nay, many of them  
 whom they thus attended recovered  
 and lived, while they who had looked  
 to them died themselves; as if by a  
 strange and prodigious charity they  
 had willingly taken their diseases up-  
 on them, and died themselves to save  
 them from death. Thus 'twas with  
 the *Christians*, while the *Gentiles* in the  
 mean time put off all sense of huma-  
 nity,



**Part 3.** nity; when any began to fall sick amongst them, they presently cast them out, shun'd their dearest friends and relations, left them half-dead in the high-ways, and took no care of them either alive or dead.

And that this work of charity might be the better managed amongst *Christians*, they had in many places (and particularly in this of *Alexandria*) certain persons whose proper office it was to attend and administer to the sick:

*Cod. Theod. lib. 16. Tit. 2. de Episcopis &c. ff. 42, 43.* They were called *Parabolani*, (because especially in pestilential and infectious distempers they did *παροβállεοντες* cast themselves into an immediate hazard of their lives) and were peculiarly deputed *ad curanda debiliū agra corpora*, (as the law of the younger *Theodosius* expresses it) to attend and cure the bodies of the infirm and sick. Their numbers it seems were very great, insomuch that upon any tumultuary occasions they became formidable even to the Courts of Civil Judicature; upon complaint whereof made to the Emperour, *Theodosius* reduced their number to five hundred; which being found too little, by a second *Constitution* he enlarged it to six hundred. The truth is, these

these *Parabolani* were a kind of *Clergy*-**Part 3.**  
*Physicians*, for that they were under an Ecclesiastical cognizance is plain, being reckon'd up with the *Clergy*, and accordingly by the latter *Constitution* of *Theodosius* are appointed to be chosen by, and to be immediately subject to the *Bishop* of the place.

A third instance of their Love and Charity (and which *S. Ambrose* calls the *highest* piece of liberality) was their care of those that were in *captivity*, *Offic. lib. 2. c. 15 p. 42.* groaning under the merciless tyranny and oppression of their enemies, to relieve them under, to *redeem* them out of their bondage and slavery. *Cyprian* in a letter to the Bishops of *Numidia* about this very thing, the redemption of *Epist. 60. p. 96.* those *Christians* amongst them that had been taken captive by the *Barbarians*, elegantly bewails their misery, and earnestly presses their redemption, and as a help towards it sent them *Sestertium* *Rigalt. in centum millia nummū*; which *Rigalt. loc.* *tius* computes to twenty five thousand *Gronov. de pecun. vet. lib. 2. c. 2. p. 131.* pounds *French*, though others more truly reduce it to a much lower sum, *viz.* seven thousand five hundred, or two thousand five hundred Crowns; which he and his people had liberally con-

Part 3. contributed to it. Of *Acacius* Bishop  
*H. Eccl. lib.* of *Amida* we read in *Socrates*, that  
 7.c. 21. p. when the *Roman* Army had taken seven  
 360. thousand *Persians* captive, and would  
 neither release them without a ransom,  
 nor yet give them food to keep them  
 alive; this good Bishop, with the con-  
 sent of the Clergy of his Church, caused  
 all the Gold and Silver *Plate* and vessels  
 that belonged to their Church to be  
 melted down, ransom'd the wretches,  
 fed them, and then freely sent them  
 home to their own Prince: with which  
*generous* Charity the King of *Persia* (as  
 he well might) was strangely amaz'd,  
 finding that the *Romans* knew how to  
 conquer an enemy by *kindness*, no less  
 than by force of *arms*. The like *S. Am-*  
*Ibid. c. 28.* *brose* relates of himself, that he caused  
 p. 50. the *Communion Plate* of his Church to  
 be broke in pieces to redeem Christians  
 taken captive by the enemy; for which  
 though he was blam'd by the *Arrian*  
 party, yet he elegantly defends the fact,  
 as not only a justifiable, but a proper  
 and eminent act of charity. And in-  
 deed 'tis the only case wherein the *Im-*  
*Phot. No-*  
*mocan.*  
*Tir. B.*  
*περ. εν*  
*κλιση. η*  
*σκευων,*  
*Θε. κερ. β.*  
 p. 43. *perial* Constitutions make it lawful to  
 sell or pawn the Plate and gifts belong-  
 ing to the Church, it being otherwise  
 made

made *sacrilege* to receive them, and Part 3.  
 the things absolutely forfeited by those  
 that bought them. This was very great,  
 but yet we meet with a *stranger* Cha-  
 rity than this in the Primitive Church,  
 some that have parted with their own  
 liberty to purchase freedom unto o-  
 thers; So *S. Clemens* assures us in his  
 famous Epistle to the *Corinthians*, *We*  
*have known many amongst our selves* *pag. 70.*  
*(says he) who have delivered themselves*  
*into bonds and slavery, that they might*  
*restore others to their liberty; many who*  
*have hir'd out themselves servants unto*  
*others, that by their wages they might*  
*feed and sustain them that wanted.* Of  
 which this one strange instance shall  
 suffice. Under the *Vandalic* persecuti-  
 on many Christians were carried slaves  
 out of *Italy* into *Africk*, for whose re- *Greg. Mag.*  
 demption *Paulinus* then Bishop of *Nola* *dial. lib. 3.*  
 had expended his whole estate; at last *c. i. p. 98.*  
 a widow comes to him, intreats him to *Edit. Col.*  
 give her as much as would ransom her *1610.*  
 only Son then slave to the King of the  
*Vandals* Son-in-law; he told her he  
 had not one penny left, nothing but his  
 own *person*, and that he would freely  
 give her to make her best of, and to  
 procure her sons ransom; this the wo-  
 man

Part 3. man look'd upon from a person of his quality as rather a *deriding* her calamity, than a *pitying* of her case: but he assur'd her he was in earnest, and at last induced her to believe him; whereupon they both took shipping for *Africk*, whither they were no sooner come, but the good Bishop address'd himself to the Prince, beg'd the release of the widows Son, and offer'd himself in his room. The issue was, the woman had her Son restor'd her, and *Paulinus* became the Princes slave, who employ'd him in the dressing and keeping of his Garden. How he afterwards ingratiated himself into the favour of his Master, and came to be discovered to him who he was, how the Prince set him at liberty, and gave him leave to ask what he would, which he made no further use of than to beg the release of all his Country men then in bondage, which was accordingly granted, and all joyfully sent home with their ships laden with Corn and Provisions, I omit as not pertinent to my purpose; they that are desirous to know more of it may read it in the Dialogues of *S. Gregory*, from whence I have borrowed the story. This certainly was Charity with

a wit-

a witness, an act that will find more to Part 3. admire and commend it, than to imitate and follow it.

A fourth instance of Primitive Charity, was the great care they took about the *bodies* of the *dead*, in giving them *decent*, and where they could, *honourable* burial; all men naturally have a kindness for their bodies, and therefore desire, that what has so long been the mansion of an *immortal* tenant, may upon its dislodging be orderly taken down, and the ruins of it laid up with honour and safety. Mans body besides that 'tis the cabinet of an invaluable jewel, is a curious piece of artifice, *fearfully and wonderfully made*, the excellent contrivance of the divine omniscience, and in that respect challenges not to be carelessly thrown aside, or rudely trampled in the dirt. This seems to be the common sense of mankind, it being the care and practice of almost all Nations in the world religiously to enshrine the remains of their deceased friends in Tombs and Sepulchres; thinking it but reasonable to testify so much kindness to their departed friends, as to honour their memories, and to secure from rude barbarous violence

Part 3. lence what they left behind them when they put off mortality. Sure I am this was eminently the care of *Christians*, no dangers or threatnings could affright them from doing this last office to their deceased brethren, especially such as had been *Martyrs* and Champions for the Truth. The *Roman* Clergy in an Epistle to them of *Carthage* reckons it as one of the greatest instances of Charity, above that of relieving the poor, ministering to the sick, or the rest which they there enumerate and reckon up; tells them that it could not be neglected without great danger, and that fidelity in this matter would be highly acceptable to God, and rewarded by him. *Dionysius* Bishop of *Alexandria* speaking of the Plague that raged there (which we mentioned but now) commends the Christians for assisting their sick dying brethren, that they closed their eyes, laid them out, washed their bodies, dressed and adorned them up for burial, and carried them out upon their own shoulders, which they chearfully did, notwithstanding the imminent danger that attended it, and that it was not long before others were called to do the same offices for them.

*Epist. 2. inter Ep. Cyp. p. 9.*

*Ibid. ubi sup.*

Part 3. them. Their bodies they decently committed to the *ground*, for they abhorred the custom so common amongst the Gentiles of *burning* the bodies of the dead; which they did, not (as the Heathens objected) because they thought that their bodies once burnt to ashes would be difficultly brought to a *Resurrection* (a doctrine which they strenuously asserted, and held fast as the main *pillar* of their comfort and confidence) but because they looked upon it as *inhumane* and *barbarous*, and contrary to the more ancient and better usage of mankind in this matter. *Tertullian* calls this way of burial by *inhumation* a piece of piety, and tells us they abstained from burning the Corps, not as some did, because they thought that some *part* of the soul remained in the body after death, but because it savour'd of savageness and cruelty. Therefore their enemies to do them the greater spite, did not only put them to death, but very often burn their dead bodies, and sprinkle their ashes into the Sea, partly to hinder them from a decent burial, and partly (as in that tumult at *Alexandria* under *Julian*) that nothing might be left of them

*Min. Fel. p. 9. -- 28.*

*De Anim. c. 5. p. 301.*

*Amth. Marcellin. lib. 2. p. 1627.*

Part 3. them to be honour'd as the remains of Martyrs. As Christianity got ground, this more civil way of inhumation did not only take place, but rooted out the contrary custome even amongst the Gentiles themselves. For though the Emperour *Theodosius* the Great gives some intimation of it as remaining in his time, yet not long after it wholly ceased, as is expressly acknowledged by *Macrobius*, who liv'd in the time of the younger *Theodosius*.

*C. Theod.*  
*l. 6. Tit. 17.*  
*de Sep. viol.*  
*Lib. 9.*  
*Saturnal.*  
*lib. 7. c. 7.*  
*pag. 514.*

*Apol. l. 42.*  
*p. 34.*

*De vit.*  
*Philos in*  
*vit. Aedif.*  
*p. 65.*

Nor did they ordinarily content themselves with a bare interment, but prepared the body for its funeral with costly *spices*, and rich odours and perfumes, not sparing the best drugs and ointments which the *Sabeans* could afford, as *Tertullian* plainly testifies. They who while alive generally abstained from whatever was curious and costly, when dead were embalm'd and entombed with great art and curiosity. Whence *Eunapius* (much such a friend to Christianity as *Julian* or *Porphry*) derides the *Monks* and Christians of *Egypt* for honouring the season'd and embalm'd bones and heads of Martyrs, such (*says he*) as the Courts of Justice had condemned, and put to death for their

their innumerable villanies. This cost Part 3. the Christians doubtless bestowed upon the bodies of their dead, because they looked upon death as the entrance into a better life, and laid up the body as the *candidate* and expectant of a joyful and happy resurrection. Besides, hereby they gave some encouragement to suffering, when men saw how much care was taken to honour and secure the reliques of their mortality, and that their bodies should not be persecuted *after* death.

This their enemies knew very well, and therefore many times denied them the civility and humanity of burial, to strike the greater dread into them. Thus *Maximus* the President threatened *Tharacus* the Martyr, that although he bore up his head so high upon the confidence, that after his death his body should be wound up and embalm'd with ointments and odoriferous spices, yet he would defeat his hopes by causing his body to be burnt, and sprinkling his ashes before the wind.

Thus after they had put *Polycarp* to death, they burnt his body out of spite to the Christians who had beg'd it of the *Proconsul*, only to give it a solemn

*Act. 55.*  
*Tharac.*  
*Prob. &*  
*Andron.*  
*apud Ba-*  
*ron. ad An-*  
*299. tom.*  
*2.*

*Enseb. H.*  
*Eccl. lib. 4.*  
*c. 15. p. 139*

Part 3. interment; whereupon gathering his bones which the mercy of the fire had spared, they decently committed them to the earth, and there used to meet to celebrate the memory of that pious and holy man.

During those times of persecution they were very careful to bury the bodies of the *Martyrs*, some making it their particular business by stealth to interr those in the night, who had suffered in the day; this they did with great hazard and danger, many of them (as appears from the ancient *Martyrologies*) suffering Martyrdom upon this very account. Afterwards when the Church was settled, there was a particular Order of men call'd *Copiatae*, (either *ἀπὸ τῆ κοπιᾶδος* from the pains they took, or else *ἀπὸ τῆ κοπᾶζεν*, because they committed the bodies of the dead to the grave the place of *ease* and *rest*) appointed for this purpose, about the time

*Cod Theod.*  
*lib. 13 Tit.*  
*1. de Lustr.*  
*Concl. 1. 1.*  
*Lib. 16. Tit.*  
*2. de Episc.*  
*l. 15. λόγ.*  
*σύντομ.*  
*περ. π 15 p.*  
*465.*

of *Constantine*, or to be sure his Son *Constantinus*, in two of whose Laws they are expressly mentioned, and in the latter said to be lately instituted. Their office (as *Epiphanius* tells) was to wrap up and bury the bodies of the dead, to prepare their graves, and to inter

terr them: and because inhumation and Part 3. giving burial to the dead was ever accounted in a more peculiar manner, a work of piety and religion; therefore these persons were reckoned if not strictly *Clergy-men*, at least in a *Clergy-relation*, being in both Laws of *Constantinus* enumerated with, and invested in the same immunities with the *Clergy*. By the Authour in *S. Hierom* they are styled *Fossarii*, *De Sept. Ordin. Ecc.* grave-maker, and by him plac'd in the *tom. 4. p. 81.* first and lowest order of the *Clerici*, and exhorted to be like good old *Tobit* in Faith, Holiness, Knowledge and Vertue. In the great Church of *Constantinople* they were called *Decani*, or *Deans* (but quite distinct from the *Palatin Deans* spoken of in the *Theodosian Lib. 6. Tit. de Decanis. l. 1.* Code, and frequently elsewhere; who were a military order, and chiefly belonged to the *Emperours* Palace) they were one of the *Collegia* or Corporations of the City. Their number was very great; *Constantine* is said to have appointed no less than M. C. of them: But by a Law of *Honorius* and *Theodosius* they were reduc'd to DCCCCCL; till afterwards *Anastasius* brought them *Lib. 1. C. tit. 2. de SS. Eccles.* back to their former number, which *l. 4.*

Part 3. was also ratified and confirmed by *Justinian*, their particular duties and offices both as relating to the dead, and all other things are largely described in two *Novell* Constitutions of his to that purpose.

*Novel. Justinian. 43 p. 114. & 59. p. 134.*

Nor did they only take care that the body might be prepared for its funeral, but to provide it of a decent and convenient *Sepulchre*, wherein it might be honourably and securely laid up; a thing which had been always practised by the more sober and civiliz'd part of mankind. Their burying-places (called *Polyandria*, *Cryptæ*, *Arenaria*, but most commonly *Cæmeteria* or *Dormitories*, because according to the notion which the Scripture gives us of the death of the Righteous, *Christians* are not so properly said to *dye* as to *sleep in the Lord*, and their bodies to *rest* in the grave in expectation of a joyful resurrection) were generally in the *fields* or *gardens*, it being prohibited by the Ro-

*man* Laws, and especially an ancient Law of the *XII Tables* to bury within the City walls. This held for some Centuries after Christianity appeared in the world, and longer it was before they buried within Churches; within the

*Apud Cicero de leg. lib. 2. p. 88. vol. 4.*

the *out-parts* whereof to be interred, Part 3. was a privilege at first granted only to *Princes* and persons of the greatest rank and quality. *Chrysostome* assures us that *Constantinus* the *Emperour* reckoned he did his Father *Constantine* the Great a peculiar honour, when he obtained to have him buried in the *Porch* of the Church which he had built at *Constantinople* to the memory of the *Apostles*, and wherein he had earnestly desired to be buried, as *Eusebius* tells us; and in the same many of his Successors were interred; it not being in use then, nor some hundreds of years after for persons to be buried in the *body* of the Church, as appears from the *Capitula* of *Charles* the Great, where burying in the Church, which then it seems had crept into some places, is strictly forbidden.

*Hom. 26. in Cap. 12. 2 ad Cor. p. 929.*

*De Vit. Const lib. 4. c. 71 p. 562*

*Lib. 1. Cap. 159. fol. 27. p. 1.*

During the first ages of Christianity, while the malice of their enemies persecuted them both *alive* and *dead*, their *Cæmeteria* were ordinarily *under ground*, imitating herein the custome of the *Jews*, whose *Sepulchres* were in *Caverns* and holes of rocks, though doubtless the *Christians* did it to avoid the rage and fury of their enemies; not so

Part 3. much upon the account of *secrecy*; for their frequent retiring to those places was so notorious, as could not escape the observation of their enemies, and therefore we sometimes find the *Emperours* Officers readily coming thither; but it was upon the account of that *sacredness* and Religion that was reckon'd to be due to places of this nature, it being accounted by all Nations a piece of great impiety, *Manes temerare Sepultos*, to disturb and violate the ashes of the dead. They were large *vaults* dug in dry sandy places, and arched over, and separated into many little *apartments*, wherein on either side the bodies of the Martyrs lay in distinct Cells, each having an *Inscription* upon Marble, whereon his *Name, Quality*, and probably the *time* and *manner* of his death were engraven: Though in the heats of Persecution they were forced to bury great numbers together in one common grave (*LX Prudentius* tells us he observ'd) and then not the names, but only the number of the interred was written upon the Tomb. Indeed the multitudes of Martyrs that then suffered required very large conveniences of interment. And so they had, in

*Prudent.  
Peri Steph.  
Pass Hip-  
pol. Mart.  
Hym. 11. f.  
339.*

inasmuch that the last publisher of the Part 3. *Roma Subterranea* assures us, that though those *Cæmeteria* were under-  
Lib. 1. c. 2.  
num. 9. p.  
4.  
ground, yet were they many times double and sometimes treble, two or three stories one still under another.

By reason hereof they must needs be very dark, having no light from without, but what peep'd in from a few little cranies, which filled the place with a kind of sacred horror, as *S. Hierom*  
Comment.  
in c. 40.  
Ezekiel.  
tom. 5. p.  
521.  
informs us, who while a youth, when he went to School at *Rome*, us'd upon the Lords day to visit these solemn places. Built they were by pious and charitable persons, (thence called after their names) for the interment of Martyrs, and other uses of the Church; for in these places Christians in times of persecution were wont to hide themselves, and to hold their Religious Assemblies, when banished from their publick Churches, as I have formerly noted. Of these about *Rome* only *Baronius* out of the Records in the *Vatican* reckons up XLIII, and others to the number of *threescore*. We may take an estimate of the rest by the account which *Baronius* gives of one, called the *Cemeterie* of *Priscilla*, discovered  
Ad An.  
226. tom.  
2.  
Ad an. 130  
vid. ad an.  
57. tom. 1.  
num. 112.  
in



Part 3. in his time, *An. 1578*, in the *Via Salara* about three miles from *Rome*, which he often viewed and searched: It is (*says he*) strange to report, the place by reason of its vastness and variety of apartments appearing like a *City under ground*. At the entrance into it there was a principal way or street much larger than the rest, which on either hand opened into diverse other wayes, and those again divided into many lesser ways and turnings, like lanes and allies within one another. And as in *Cities* there are void open places for the *Markets*; so here there were some larger spaces for the holding (as occasion was) of their Religious Meetings, wherein were placed the *Effigies* and Representations of Martyrs, with places in the top to let in *light*, long since stopt up. The discovery of this place caused great wonder in *Rome*, being the most exact and perfect *Cemeterie* that had been yet found out. Thus much I thought good to add upon occasion of that singular care, which Christians then took about the bodies of their dead. If any desire to know more of these venerable Antiquities, they may consult *Onuphrius de Cemeteriis*,

*terris*, and especially the *Latin Edition* Part 3. of the *Roma Subterranea*, where their largest curiosity may be fully satisfied in these things. Edit. à Paul. Arringhio Rom. 1651 & Col. 1659.

Many other instances of their Charity might be mentioned, their ready entertaining strangers, providing for those that laboured in the Mines, marrying poor Virgins, and the like, of which to treat particularly would be too vast and tedious. To enable them to do these charitable offices, they had not only the extraordinary contributions of particular persons, but a common stock and treasury of the Church. At the first going abroad of the Gospel into the world, so great was the Piety and Charity of the Christians, That *the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common; neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.* But this community

Part 3. munity of goods lasted not long in the Church ; we find *S. Paul* giving order  
*1 Cor. 16.* to the Churches of *Galatia* and *Corinth*  
*1, 2.* for weekly offerings for the Saints, that upon the first day of the week (when they never fail'd to receive the Sacrament) they should every one of them lay by him in store according as God had prospered him. This custome *Justin Martyr* assures us still continued in his time ; for describing the manner of their assemblies on the *Lords day*, he tells us that those who were able and willing contributed what they saw good ; and the collection was lodg'd in the hands of the *Bishop* or *President*, and by him distributed for the relief of Widows and Orphans, the sick or indigent, the imprison'd or strangers, or any that were in need. In the next age they were reduced to monthly offerings, as appears from *Tertullian*, who gives us this account of them in his time, That at their Religious Assemblies upon a monthly day (or oftner if a man will, and be able) every one according to his ability laid by somewhat for charitable uses (they put it into a kind of poor mans box call'd *Arca*, that stood in the Church) this they did freely, no man

*Apol. 2. p.*  
*98, 99.*

*Apol. c. 39.*  
*p. 31.*

man being forced or compelled to it ; Part 3. leaving it behind them as a stock to maintain piety and religion ; for 'tis not spent (*says he*) upon feasts or drinking-bouts, or to gratifie gluttony and intemperance, but laid out in relieving the needy, burying the dead, providing for Orphans, supporting the aged, recruiting the spoyled, supplying the imprisoned, and those that were in mines, bonds, or slavery for the profession of Christianity.

This was the fruit of Primitive devotion. *Palladius* tells us of two Brother, *Paesius* and *Esaias*, Sons of a wealthy Merchant, that their Father being dead, and resolving upon a more strict and religious course of life, they could not agree upon settling their Estates in the same way ; at last dividing their Estates, they disposed them thus. The one gave away his whole Estate at once, settling it upon *Monasteries*, churches, and *Prisons* for the relief of such as were in bonds, and betaking himself to a Trade for a small maintenance for himself, gave himself up to prayer and the severer exercises of Religion. The other kept his Estate in his own possession, but built a *Monastery*,

*Histor.*  
*Lausiac.*  
*c. 15. p. 41.*

Part 3. *stern*, and taking a few Companions to dwell with him, entertain'd all *strangers* that came that way, took care of the *sick*, entertained the *aged*, gave to those that needed, and every *Saturday* and *Lords day* caused two or three *tables* to be spread for the refreshment and entertainment of the *poor*; and in this excellent way spent their life.

Now that this account that we have given of the admirable bounty and charity of the antient Christians is not *precarious*, and meerly what the *Christians* tell us of themselves, we have the testimony of two open enemies of Christianity, *Julian* and *Lucian*, both bitter enemies to Christians, and the fiercer, because both, as 'tis supposed, apostates from them, and their testimony is considerable upon a double account, partly because having lived amongst the *Christians* they exactly knew their ways and manners; and partly because being enemies to them they would be sure to speak no more in their commendation than what was true. *Julian* speaking of the *Galileans*, tells us that by their charity to the poor they begot *πολύ τῆς ἀδεύματος δαύμα*, the greatest admiration of their Religion

*Misapp.  
p. 99.*

Religion in the minds of men. And Part 3. in an Epistle to the *High-Priests* of *Galatia*, bewailing the desolate state of the *heathen-world*, the ruine of their Temples, and the great declension of *Paganisme* at that time, notwithstanding all his endeavours to make it succeed under the influences of his Government; he advises the High-Priest to promote the *Gentile-interest* by the same method, which the wicked Religion of the *Christians* did thrive by, i. e. by their bounty to *strangers*, their care in *burying* of the dead, and their *holiness* of life; and elsewhere, *The poor* (says he) *having no care taken of them, the wicked Galileans know very well how to make their advantage of it, for they give themselves up to humanity and charity, and by these plausible and insinuating ways strengthen and encrease their wicked and pernicious party; just as men cheat little children with a cake, by two or three of which they tempt them to go along with them, till having got them from home, they clap them under hatches, transport and sell them, and so for a little seeming pleasure they are condemned to bitterness all their life; and no otherwise* (says he) *'tis with them, they*

*Epist. 49.  
ad Arfac.  
oper. par. 2.  
p. 203.*

*Fragm. Epist. par. 1.  
p. 557.*

Part 3. *they first inveigle honest minded men with what they call their feasts of Love, banquets, ministry and attendance upon tables, and then seduce them into their wickedness and impiety.* This as at once it shews his *venom* and malice according to the humour of the man, so it openly bears witness out of the mouth of an enemy to the most excellent and generous spirit of the Gospel. The other testimony is that of *Lucian*, (who if not a *Christian* himself, for *Suidas* his *ἰνυμῶς* & ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ does no way intimate him to have been a *Christian* Preacher, notwithstanding what the generality of Writers have inferred thence; was yet however intimately acquainted with the affairs of *Christians*) who bringing in his *Philosopher Peregrinus* amongst other *sects* joyning himself to the *Christians*, tells us what care they took of him, when cast into prison they improved all their interest to have him *released*: But when this could not be granted, they officiously used all possible *service* and respect towards him; in the morning old women, widows, and children flock'd early to the prison-doors; and the better sort got leave of the Keepers to sleep with

In voc.

Λυκίανός.

De mort:  
Peregrin.  
p. 762,  
763. tom.  
2.

with him in the prison all night; then Part 3. they had several sorts of *banquets*, and their *sacred discourses*: Nay, some were sent in the name of the rest even from the Cities of *Asia* to assist, and encourage him; who brought him great sums of *mony* under pretence of his imprisonment; it being incredible what readiness they shew, when any such matter is once noys'd abroad, and how little they spare any cost in it. After which he tells us of them in general, that they equally condemn all the advantages of this life, and account them common, foolishly taking up their principles about these things without any accurate search into them; inso-much that if any *subtle* and *crafty* fellow, that knows how to improve his advantage, come amongst them, he grows very rich in a little time, by making a prey of that simple and credulous people.

There's one circumstance yet behind concerning the *love* and *charity* of those times very worthy to be taken notice of, and that is the universal extent of it, they *did good to all, though more especially to them of the household of faith*, i. e. to *Christians*; they did not confine their bounty meerly within the

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Part 3. narrow limits of a *party*, this or that sect of men, but embraced an object of love and pity where-ever they met it. They were kind to all men, yea to their bitterest enemies, and that with a charity as large as the *circles* of the Sun that visits all parts of the World, and shines as well upon a stinking dunghil, as upon a pleasant Garden. 'Tis certainly the strange and supernatural doctrine of our Saviour, *you have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.* This indeed is the proper goodness and excellency of *Christianity*, as *Tertullian* observes, it being *common* to all men to love their friends, but peculiar only to *Christians* to love their *enemies*. And *Athenagoras* I remember principally makes use of this Argument to prove the *Divinity* of the *Christian* Religion, and challenges all the great Masters of Reason and Learning amongst the *Heathens* to produce any, either of themselves or their Disciples, of so pure and refin'd a temper, as could instead of *hating*, love their enemies, bear

*Ad Scap.*  
c. 1. p. 69.

*Legat. pro*  
*Christian.*  
p. 11.

*curses*

*curses* and *revilings* with an undisturbed Part 3. mind, and instead of *reviling* again, to *bless* and *speak* well of them, and to *pray* for them who lay in wait to take away their lives. And yet this did *Christians*, they embraced their enemies, pardoned and prayed for them, according to the *Apostles* rule, when *their enemy hungred they fed him, when he thirsted they gave him drink, and would not be overcome of evil, but overcame evil with good.* When *Nazianzen* Vit. ejus per Greg. Presbyt. (then Bishop of *Constantinople*) lay sick, a young man came to his bedside, and taking hold of his feet, with tears and great lamentation passionately begg'd pardon of him for his wickedness; the Bishop asking what he meant by it, he was told that this was the person that had been suborned by a wicked party to have murdered him, and now being stricken with the conscience of so great a wickedness, came to bewail his sin: The good man immediately prayed to *Christ* to forgive him, desiring no other satisfaction from him than that henceforth he would *forsake* that Heretical party, and sincerely serve God as became a *Christian*. Euseb. de Martyr. Palestin. c. 8. p. 332. Thus when *Paul* the Martyr was ha-

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Part 3. *stening to his execution, he only begg'd so much respite, till he might pray (which accordingly he did) not only for the peace and happiness of Christians, but for the conversion of Jews and Samaritans, for the Gentiles that they might be brought out of error and ignorance to the knowledge of God and the true Religion; he prayed for the people that attended his execution; nay, (such his vast goodness and charity) for the very Judge that condemned him; for the Emperours, and the very Executioner that stood ready to cut off his head, earnestly begging of God not to lay that great wickedness to their charge. Nay, they did not think it enough not to return evil for evil, or barely to forgive their enemies, unless they did them all the kindness that lay in their power. Polycarp*

*Euseb. lib. 4. c. 15. p. 130.*

*Martyr. ejus apud Sur. ad 17. Aug. Tom. 4. ex. S. Metraph.*

*plentifully feasted the very Officers, that were sent to apprehend him; the same which S. Mamas the Martyr is also said to have done, treating the Souldiers with the best supper he had, when sent by Alexander the cruel President of Cappadocia to seize upon him. And we read of one Pachomius an*

*Constan-*

*Constantine, that the Army being well Part 3. near starv'd for want of necessary provisions, and coming to a City that was most inhabited by Christians, they freely and speedily gave them what-ever they wanted for the accommodation of the Army. Amazed with this strange and unwonted charity, and being told that the people that had done it were Christians whom they generally prey'd upon, and whose profession it was to hurt no man, and to do good to every man, he threw away his arms, became an Anchorer, and gave up himself to the strictest severities of Religion. This also Julian the Emperour plainly confesses; for urging Arsacius the chief Priest of Galatia, to take care of the poor, and to build Hospitals in every City for the entertaining of poor strangers and travellers, both of their own and other Religions; he adds, for it's a shame (says he) that when the Jews suffer none of theirs to beg, and the wicked Galileans relieve not only their own, but also those of our party, that we only should be wanting in so necessary a duty: So prevalent is truth as to extort a confession from its most bitter and virulent opposers. Of this I shall on-*

*Metaph. in vit. Pachomii apud Sur. ad diem 14. Martii tom. 3.*

*Ubi prius.*

Part 3. ly add one instance or two more, proper enough to be inserted here. *Ense-*  
*H. Ecclesi-* *bius* speaking of that dreadful plague  
*ast. lib. 9. c.* and famine that happened in the *East-*  
*8. p. 357.* *ern* Parts under the Emperour *Maxi-*  
*minus*, wherein so many whole Families miserably perished, and were swept away at once; he adds, that at this time the care and piety of the *Christians* towards all evidently approved it self to all the *Gentiles* that were about them; they being the only persons that during this sad and calamitous state of things performed the real offices of *mercy* and *humanity*; partly in ordering and *burying* of the dead (thousands dying every day, of whom no care was taken) partly in gathering together all the *poor* that were ready to starve, and distributing bread to every one of them. The same whereof fill'd the ears and mouths of all men who extolled the *God* of the *Christians*, and confessed that they had shewed themselves to be the *only* truly pious and religious persons. And indeed the charity was the more remarkable, in that the *Christians* at this very time were under a most heavy persecution. Thus in the terrible plague that

that in the times of *Gallus* and *Volus-* Part 3.  
*ian* raged so much through the whole world (and that more or less for fifteen years together) especially at *Carthage*, when innumerable multitudes were swept away every day, and the streets filled with the carcases of the *dead*, which seemed to implore the help of the *living*, and to challenge it as their right by the common Laws of humane nature; but all in vain, every one trembling, flying, and shifting for themselves, deserting their nearest friends and kindred, none staying unless it was to make a prey. In this sad and miserable case *Cyprian* then Bishop of the *Pont. in*  
*vir. Cypri-* place, calls the *Christians* together, in-  
*an p. 13.* structs them in the duties of mercy and charity, puts them in mind, that it was no great wonder if their charity extended to their *own party*; the way to be *perfect*, was to do something *more* than *Heathens* and *Publicans*, to *overcome evil with good*, to imitate the divine benignity, to *love our enemies*, and according to our *Lords* advice to *pray for the happiness of them that persecute us*; that *God* continually made his *sun* to *rise*, and his *rain* to *fall* not only for the advantage of his *own* children,

Part 3. dren, but for all other mens; and that therefore they should imitate the example of such a *father*, who professed themselves to be his *children*. Immediately upon this they unanimously agreed to assist their common enemies, every one lending help according to his rank and quality. Those who by reason of their poverty could contribute nothing to the charge, did what was more, they personally wrought and laboured, an assistance beyond all other contributions: By which large and abundant charity great advantage redounded not to themselves only of *the household of faith*, but universally unto all.

I shall sum up what hath been said upon this Argument in that elegant Discourse which *Lactantius* has concerning works of mercy and charity. Since humane nature (*says he*) is *weaker* than that of other *creatures*, who come into the world armed with offensive and defensive powers, therefore our wise Creatour has given us a tender and merciful disposition, that we might place the *safeguard* of our lives in the mutual assistances of one another. For being all created by *one God*,

*Lact. Epi-  
tom. c. 7. p.  
746.*

*God*, and sprung from one common *parent*, we should reckon our selves *a-kin*, and obliged to love all mankind; and (that our innocency may be perfect) not only not to do an *injury* to another, but not to *revenge* one when done to our selves; for which reason also we are commanded *to pray for our very enemies*. We ought therefore to be kind and sociable, that we may help and assist each other. For being *our selves* obnoxious to misery, we may the more comfortably hope for that help, in case we need it, which our selves have given unto *others*. And what can more effectually induce us to relieve the indigent, than to put our selves into their *stead*, who beg help from us? If any be hungry, let us *feed* him; is he naked, let us *cloath* him; if wronged by a powerful oppressour, let us *rescue* and receive him. Let our doors be open to *strangers*, and such who have not where to lay their head. Let not our assistance be wanting to *Widows* and *Orphans*: And (which is a mighty instance of charity) let us *redeem* the captiv'd, *visit* and assist the *sick*, who are able to take no care of themselves; and for strangers and the poor (in case they



Part 3. they die) let us not suffer them to want the conveniency of a *Grave*. These are the offices and the works of mercy, which who-ever does, offers up a true and grateful sacrifice to God; who is not pleased with the *blood of beasts*, but the *charity of men*; whom therefore he treats upon their own terms, has *mercy* on them whom he sees *merciful*, and is *inexorable* to those who *shut up their bowels* against them that ask them. In order therefore to our thus pleasing God, let us make light of money, and transmit it into the *heavenly treasures*, where neither *moth nor rust* doth corrupt, nor *thieves break through and steal*, nor Tyrants are able to seize and take it from us, but where it shall be kept to our eternal advantage under the *custody* of God himself.

## CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

Of their Unity and Peace-  
ableness.

*The Laws of Christ tend to beget a peaceable disposition. This seen in our Saviour himself, in his Apostles and the whole body of Christians. The account Justin Martyr gives of them. The world over-run with quarrels before Christ's coming: The happy alteration that succeeded upon his appearance in it. This particularly urged by Eusebius. How much Christians contributed to the peace and quietness of the world. Their unity among themselves. Canonical Epistles; the several sorts of them, Συσταλινὰ Ἀποστολινὰ Ἐισπρινὰ. What their nature and tendency. Differences presently endeavoured to be healed. The great care and solicitude of Constantine that way. An eminent instance of condescension and self-denial in Gregory Nazianzen for the peace of the Church. Difference in Rituals and lesser matters no hinderance of peace and*

and Christian Communion; manifested in the case of Polycarp and Anicetus Bishop of Rome. Christians not provoked by every trifling quarrel. The difference in this respect between them, and the best Philosophers.

THE primitive Christians being of such a meek, compassionate and benevolent temper as we have represented them, it cannot be thought but that they were of a very quiet disposition and peaceable conversation; and the having been so large in that, will excuse me for being shorter in this. When our blessed Saviour came to establish his religion in the world, he gave a Law suitable to his nature, and to the design of his coming into the world, and to the exercise of his Government as he is Prince of peace, a Law of mildness and gentleness, of submission and forbearance towards one another; we are commanded to follow peace with all men, to follow after the things that make for peace, as much as in us lies to live peaceably with all men; we are forbidden all feuds and quarrels, enjoined not to revenge our selves, but to give place unto wrath, to let all bit-

terness,

terness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from us, with all malice, to be kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake forgives us. These are the Laws of Christianity, which whenever they are duly entertained produce the most gentle and good natur'd principles, the most innocent and quiet carriage. This eminently appeared in the life of our blessed Saviour, who was the most incomparable instance of kindness and civility, of peace and quietness; we never find him all his life treating any with sharpness and severity but the Scribes and Pharisees, who were a pack of surly, malicious, ill-natur'd fellows, and could be wrought upon by no other methods; otherwise his mildness and humility, the affability and obligingness of his conversation, and his remarkable kindness to his greatest enemies were sufficiently obvious both in his life and death; and such was the temper of his Disciples and followers, this excellent spirit like leaven spreading it self over the whole mass of Christians, turning the brier into a myrtle-tree, and the Vultur into a Dove.

Part 3. Dove. See the account which *Justin* the *Martyr* gives of them. We who formerly valued our money and estates before all things else, do now put them into a common *stock*, and distribute them to those that are in need: We who once hated each other and delighted in mutual quarrels and slaughters, and according to the custom refused to sit at the same fire with those who were not of our own *tribe* and party; now since the appearance of *Christ* in the world live familiarly with them, *pray for our enemies*, and endeavour to persuade those that unjustly hate us to order their lives according to the excellent precepts of *Christ*, that so they may have good hope to obtain the same rewards with us from the great Lord and Judge of all things.

But for the better understanding of this it may be useful to observe, what a remarkable alteration in this respect the *Christian* Religion made in the world. Before *Christ's* coming the word was generally over-run with *fends* and quarrels, mighty and almost implacable animosities and divisions reigning amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*; the *Jews* looked upon the *Gentiles*, as

*dogs*

*dogs* and *out-casts*, refus'd all dealings with them, even to the denial of courtesies of common charity and civility, such as to *tell* a man *the way* or to give him a *draught* of water; they reproached them as the vilest and most profligate part of mankind, *sinners of the Gentiles*, as the *Apostle* calls them according to the usual style and title. Nor did the *Gentiles* less scorn and deride the *Jews*, as a pitiiful and contemptible generation, stopping their noses, and abhorring the very sight of them if by chance they met them; they looked upon them as an *unsociable* people, as *enemies* of all Nations, that did not so much as *wish well* to any; nay, as *haters* even of mankind, as *Tacitus* and their enemies in *Josephus* represent them. The effect of all which was, that they oppressed and persecuted them in every place, trod them as dirt under their feet, till at last the *Romans* came and finally *took away both their place and Nation*. Thus stood the case between them till the arrival of *the Prince of peace*; who partly by his *death*, whereby he *broke down the partition-wall* between *Jew* and *Gentile*, partly by the healing nature and tendency of his *doctrine*,

Part 3.

*Joh. 4. 9.*

*Juvenal.*

*Satyr. 14.*

p. 439.

*Gal. 2. 15.*

Histor. lib.

5 c. 4. 5. p.

515. *ἐχθροί*

*α' μνηστων, α'*

*συμυλον, α'*

*τε βρησκειαν*

*τω αυτω*

*τοις α'μοις*

*εχον, βρε νο-*

*μοις, χρωμα-*

*νο ομοιαις,*

*εχθρον ε' η'*

*τοις ε'δωις, η'*

*τοις επιτη-*

*δω μαι το*

*αυ λαω η' α'*

*παιν α'υρα-*

*ποις... δυ-*

*σμεγες ε'*

*νο, η' τοις*

*α'μοις*

*α'μοχρον.*

*Jos. Anti-*

*quit. Judaica*

*lib. 11. c. 6.*

*vid. Esther.*

*3. 8. vid. Cic-*

*pro Flac. p.*

*68. Tom. 2.*

Part 3. *Erine*, partly by the quiet and peaceable carriage of his followers, did quickly extirpate and remove those mutual feuds and animosities, and silence those passionate and quarrellsome divisions, that were amongst men.

Preparat.  
Evangel.  
lib. I. c. 4.  
p. 10, 11.  
Vid. Atha-  
nas. de  
verb. in-  
carnat. p.  
98. tom. I.

This Argument *Eusebius* particularly prosecutes, and shewes that while the Nations were under *Paganism* and *Idolatry*, they were filled with wars and troubles, and all the effects of barbarous rage and fury; but that after the divine and peaceable doctrine of our *Saviour* came abroad, those differences and calamities began to cease, according to the predictions that were of him, that *there should be righteousness and abundance of peace in his days; that men should beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; that Nation should not lift up sword against Nation, nor learn war any more; that this must needs be in some measure the effect of his appearance, his doctrine being so fitly calculated to soften the rough and brutish manners of men, and to train them up in milder and more humane institutions. And a little after he makes it an uncontrollable argument of the truth and*

excellency

excellency of the *Christian* doctrine, Part 3. that it teaches men to bear the reproaches and provocations of enemies with a generous and unshaken mind, and to be able not to revenge our selves, by falling foul upon them with the like indignities and affronts; to be above anger and passion, and every inordinate and unruly appetite; to administer to the wants and necessities of the helpless, and to embrace every man as our kindred and countrey-man, and though reputed a stranger to us, yet to own him as if by the law of Nature he were our nearest friend and brother. How much their Religion contributed to the publick tranquillity by forbidding *Pride, Passion, Covetousness* and such sins as are the great springs of confusion and disturbance, *Justin Martyr* tells the Emperours; As for peace (*says he*) we above all men in the world promote and further it, forasmuch as we teach that no wicked man, no covetous or treacherous person, no good or virtuous man can lye hid from the eye of God, but that every man is travelling either towards an eternal happiness or misery according to the desert and nature of his works: and did all men

Apol. 2. p.  
59.

V

know

Part 3. know and believe this, no man would dare for a few moments to deliver up himself to vice and wickedness, knowing 'twould lead him on to the condemnation of everlasting fire; but would rather by all means restrain himself, and keep within the bounds of virtue, that he might obtain the rewards that are dispens'd by God, and avoid the punishments that are inflicted by him. The truth is, our blessed Lord came not to inspire men with principles of revenge and passion, to teach them to *return evil for evil*, but to encourage love and gentleness, to teach men to overcome by suffering, and to obtain the reward by meekness and patience. *Isidore the Pelusiote* treating of that place, *to him that smites thee on the right cheek turn the other also*, has this short discourse upon it. The great King of Heaven came down from above, to deliver to the world the laws of an heavenly conversation; which he has propos'd in a way of conflict and striving, quite contrary to that of the *Olympick* games. There he that fights and gets the better receives the *Crown*; here he that is stricken and bears it meekly, has the honour and applause:

Epist. 127.  
lib. 3. p.  
269.

there

there he that returns blow for blow, Part 3.  
here he that *turns the other cheek*, is celebrated in the *Theatre of Angels*; for the victory is measured not by revenge, but by a wise and generous patience: this is the *New Law* of Crowns; this the new way of conflicts and contentions.

Such was the temper, such the carriage of Christians towards their *enemies*, and them that were without; within themselves they maintained the most admirable peace and harmony, and were in a manner of *one heart and soul*. They liv'd in the strictest amity, and abhor'd all division as a plague and fire-brand. But because mens understandings not being all of one *size*, nor all truths alike plain and evident, differences in mens *Judgments* and *Opinions* must needs arise; no Schism ever arose in the Church about any of the more considerable principles of Religion, but it was presently bewailed with the universal resentment of all pious and good men, and the breach endeavour'd to be made up; no ways left unattempted, no methods of persuasion omitted that might contribute to it.

When *Novatus*, [or rather *Novatian*]  
V 2 had

Part 3. had made some disturbance in the Church of *Rome* concerning the receiving the lapsed into Communion, *Dionysius* the good Bishop of *Alexandria* writes to him to extinguish the Schism; tells him 'tis better to suffer any thing than that the Church of God should be rent in pieces; that it's no less glorious, and probably more illustrious to suffer Martyrdom to keep division out of the Church, than to dye for not sacrificing to Idols; for in the one case a man suffers martyrdom only upon his own account, but in the other he suffers for the advantage and benefit of the whole Church. And *Cyprian* positively asserts (according to the Apostles resolution of the case) that without this unity and charity *a man cannot enter into Heaven*; and that although he should deliver up himself to the *flames*, or cast his body to wild beasts, yet this would not be the crown of his *Faith*, but the punishment of his *falsehood*, not the glorious exit of a religious virtue, but the issue of despair; such a one may be *killed*, but he cannot be *crowned*.——

He that rents the Unity of the Church, destroys the *Faith*, disturbs the *Peace*, dissolves *Charity*, and profanes the *Holy*

*Enseb. H.  
Ecc. lib. 6.  
c. 45. p.  
247.*

*De Unit.  
Ecc. p. 184*

*Sacra-*

*Sacrament*. How severely they branded Part 3. all schism & division in the Church, how industriously they laboured to take up all controversies amongst Christians, and to reconcile *dissenting brethren*, to maintain concord and agreement amongst themselves, and to prevent all occasions of quarrel & dissention, might be easily made to appear out of the Writers of those times. Hence those *Canonical Epistles* (as they called them) wherewith persons were wont to be furnish'd when going from one place to another; of which there were especially three sorts. First, *Eussalikai* or *Commendatory Epistles*, mentioned by *S. Paul*, and were in use amongst the Heathens. They were granted to *Clergy-men* going into another *Diocess* by the Bishop that ordained them, testifying their ordination, their soundness and orthodoxy in the Faith, the innocency and unblameableness of their lives: To those that had been under, or had been suspected of *Excommunication*, declaring their absolution, and recommending them to be received in the number of the *faithful*: Lastly, they were granted to all, whether *Clergy* or *Laity*, that were to travel, as *Tickets of Hospitality*, that

Part 3. whereever they came, upon the producing these letters they might be known to be *Catholic* and Orthodox, and as such received and entertained by them.

*Socrum, H.  
Ecc. lib. 5.  
c. 16 p.  
617, Naz.  
in Jul. 1.  
p. 102.*

A piece of prudence which *Julian* the *Apostate* admired in the *Christian* constitution, the like whereto he endeavoured to establish in his Pagan reformation. The Second sort were *Ἀπολυταί*, Letters *Dimissory*, whereby leave was given to persons going into another Diocess, either to be *Ordained* by the Bishop of that place, or if ordain'd already, to be admitted and *incorporated* into the Clergy of that Church, Upon which account the ancient *Councils* every where provide that no stranger shall either receive ordination at the hands of another Bishop, or exercise any ministerial act in another Diocess, without the consent and *dimissory* Letters of the Bishop of that place from whence he comes. The third were *Ἐπιστολαί*, letters of Peace, granted by the Bishop to the poor that were oppressed, and such as fled to the Church for its protection and assistance; but especially to such of the Clergy as were to go out of one Diocess into another, it being directed to the Bishop of that Diocess,

Diocess, that he would receive him; Part 3. that so he might take no offence, but that peaceable concord and agreement might be maintained between them. By these arts the prudence of those times sought to secure the peace of the Church, and as much as might be, prevent all dissensions that might arise. And where matters of any greater moment fell out, how quickly did they flock together to compose and heal them?

Hence those many *Synods* and *Councils* that were conven'd to umpire differences, to explain or *define* *Articles* of Faith, to condemn and suppress the disturbers of the Church, and innovators in Religion. What infinite care did the good Emperour *Constantine* take for composing the *Arrian* controversies which then began first to infect and over-run the world? How much his heart was set upon it, his solicitous thoughts taken up about it, how many troublesome days and restless nights it cost him, with what strong and nervous arguments, what affectionate intreaties he presses it, may be seen in that excellent Letter (yet extant in his Life) which he wrote to the Authors of those

*De Vir.  
Constant.  
lib. 2. c. 64.  
¶ seqq. p.  
473.*

Part 3. impious and unhappy controversies, But when this would not do, he summon'd the great Council of *Nice*, consisting of *three hundred and eighteen Bishops*, and in his Speech at the opening of that Council conjur'd them by all that was dear and sacred to agree, and to compose those dissensions which were risen in the Church, which he seriously protested he looked upon as more grievous and dangerous than any war whatsoever, and that they created greater trouble and inquietude to his mind, than all the other affairs of his Empire. And when several of the Bishops then in Council had preferred *Libells* and Accusations one against another, without ever reading them, he bundled and seal'd them all up together, and having reconciled and made them friends, produc'd the papers, and immediately threw them into the fire before their faces. So passionately desirous was that good Prince to extinguish the flames, and to redeem the peace of the Church at any rate. Were any ejected and thrown out of the Church, of which there might be a suspicion of private grudges or designs, the *Nicene* Council wisely provided,

*Ibid. lib. 3.  
c. 12. p. 489*

*Theod. H.  
Eccl. lib. 1  
c. 11. p. 259*

*Ecc. 3.*

vided, That in every Province a *synod* should be held twice a year, where all the Bishops meeting together might discuss the case, and compose the difference. Or, as *Joseph the Egyptian* in his *Arabick* version of that *Canon* tells us, an *Arbitrator* was to be appointed between the differing parties, to take up the quarrel, that it might not be a scandal to Religion.

Nor did there want meek and peaceable-minded men who valued the *publick* welfare before any *private* and personal advantage, and could make their own particular concerns strike sail, when the peace and interest of the Church called for it. When great contests and confusions were raised by some perverse and unquiet persons about the See of *Constantinople* (then possessed by *Gregory Nazianzen*) he himself stood up in the midst of the Assembly and told the Bishops, how unfit it was that they who were *preachers* of peace to others, should fall out amongst themselves, beg'd of them even by the *Sacred Trinity* to manage their affairs calmly and peaceably; and if I (says he) be the *Jonas* that raises the storm, throw me into the sea, and let these storms

*Vit. Greg.  
Naz. per  
Gregor.  
Presbyt.*



Part 3. *storm and tempests cease. I am willing to undergo what ever you have a mind to; and though innocent and unblameable, yet for your peace and quiet sake, am content to be banished the throne, and to be cast out of the City; only according to the Prophets counsel, be careful to love truth and peace: And therewith freely resigned his Bishoprick, though legally settled in it by the expresse command and warrant of the Emperour, and the universal desires and acclamations of the people.*

The same excellent temper ruled in S. Chrysostome one of his successors in that See; when having elegantly pressed the unity of the Church, and refuted those petty cavils which his adversaries had against himself; *But if you (says he to his people) suspect these things of us, we are ready to deliver up our place and power to whomsoever you will; only let the Church be preserved in peace and unity.* This was the brave and noble disposition of mind, to which S. Clemens sought to reduce the *Corinthians*, after they had fallen into a little Schism and disorder: Who is there among you (*says he*) of that generous temper, that *compassionate and charitable*

Homil. 11.  
in Ep. ad  
Ephes. p.  
1110.

Epist. ad  
Cor. p. 69.

Part 3. *ble disposition? Let him say, if this Sedition, these Schisms and contentions have arisen through my means, or upon my account, I'll depart and be gone whithersoever you please, and will do what the people shall command; only let Christs sheep-fold together with the Elders that are placed over it, be kept in peace.*

Nay, when good men were most zealous about the main and foundation-articles of Faith, so as sometimes rather to hazard Peace, than to betray the Truth, yet in matters of *indifferency*, and such as only concern'd the rituals of Religion, they mutually bore with one another, without any violation of that Charity which is the great law of Christianity. Thus in that famous controverſie about the keeping of *Easter*, so much agitated between the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches, *Irenæus* in a Letter to *Pope Victor* (who of all that ever sat in that chair had raised the greatest stir about it) tells him that Bishops in former times, however they differed about the observation of it, yet alwayes maintain'd an intire concord and fellowship with one another, the Churches being careful to maintain a peaceable communion,

Epist. 11.  
Ecclesiast. 3.  
c. 24. p.  
193.

Part 3. munion, though differing in some particular Rites and Ceremonies, yea even when their rites and customs seemed to clash by meeting together at the same place. Thus when *Polycarp* came to *Rome* from the Churches of the *East* to treat with *Pope Anicetus* about this and some other affairs, though they could not satisfy each other to yield the controversy, yet they *kissed* and embraced one another with mutual endearments, received the Holy Communion together; and *Anicetus* to do the greater honour to *Polycarp* gave him leave to celebrate and consecrate the *Eucharist* in his Church; and at last they parted in great peace and friendship; the difference of the observance not at all hindering the agreement and harmony of the Churches, it being agreed amongst them by common consent (says *H. Ecc. Hist. Sozomen* speaking of this passage) that in keeping this festival they should each follow their own *custom*, but by no means break the *peace* and communion that was between them; for they reckoned it (*says he*) a very foolish and unreasonable thing, that they should fall out for a few rites and customs, who agreed in the main Principles of Religion.

H. Ecc. Hist.  
7. c. 19. p.  
234.

The

Part 3. The Christians of those times had too deeply imbibed that precept of our Saviour, *love one another, as I have loved you*, to fall out about every nice and trifling circumstance; no, when highly provoked and affronted they could *forbear* and *forgive* their enemies, much more their brethren, and were not like the *waspy* Philosophers amongst the *Heathens*, who were ready to fall foul upon one another for every petty and inconsiderable difference of opinion that was amongst them. So *Origen* tells *Celsus*, Both amongst your Philosophers and Physicians (*says he*) there are *sects* that have perpetual feuds and quarrels with each other, whereas we who have entertained the Laws of the blessed *Jesus*, and have learnt both to speak and to do according to his doctrine, *blest them that revile us, being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat*; nor do we speak dire and dreadful things against those that differ from us in opinion, and do not presently embrace those things, which we have entertain'd; But as much as in us lies we leave nothing unattempted that may persuade them to change for the better, and to give up themselves

Lib. 5. p.

273.

Part 3. themselves only to the service of the great Creatour, and to do all things as those that must give an account of their actions. In short, Christians were careful not to offend either God or men, but to keep and maintain peace with both; thence that excellent saying of Ephraem Syrus the famous Deacon of Edessa when he came to die; *In my whole life (said he) I never reproached my Lord and Master, nor suffered any foolish talk to come out of my lips, nor did I ever curse or revile any man, or maintain the least difference or controversy with any Christian in all my life.*

Vit. E.  
phraem Syr.  
per Gregor.  
Nyss. tom.  
2. p. 1033.

#### CHAP. IV.

Of their Obedience and Subjection to Civil Government.

*Magistracy the great band of publick peace. This highly secured by Christianity. The Laws of Christ that way express and positive. Made good in his own practice, and the practice of his Apostles. The same spirit in succeeding Ages, manifested out of Justin Martyr, Polycarp, Tertullian and*

Origen.

Part 3. Origen. *Praying for Rulers and Emperours a solemn part of their publick worship. Their ready payment of all Customs and Tributes, and their faithfulness in doing it. Christians such, even under the heaviest oppressions and persecutions, and that when they had power to have righted and reveng'd themselves. An excellent passage in Tertullian to that purpose. The temper of the Christian Souldiers in Julian's Army. The famous Story of Mauricius, and the Thebæan Legion under Maximinianus reported at large out of Eucherius Lugdunensis. The injustice of the charge brought against them by the Heathens, of being enemies to Civil Government. Accused of Treason. Of their refusing to swear by the Emperours genius. Their denying to sacrifice for the Emperours safety, and why they did so. Their refusing to own the Emperours for gods, and why. Their not observing the solemn Festivals of the Emperours, and the reasons of it. Accused of Sedition and holding unlawful Combinations. An account of the Collegia and Societies in the Roman Empire. Christianity forbidden upon that account.*

The

*The Christian Assemblies no unlawful Conventions. A vast difference between them and the unlawful factions forbidden by the Roman Laws. Their confident challenging their enemies to make good one charge of disturbance or rebellion against them. Their Laws and principles quite contrary. The Heathens themselves guilty of rebellions and factions, not the Christians. The Testimony given them by Julian the Emperour. A reflection upon the Church of Rome for corrupting the doctrine and practice of Christianity in this affair. Their principles and policies in this matter. Bellarmin's position, that 'tis lawful to depose infidel and heretical Princes, and that the Primitive Christians did it not to Nero, Dioclesian, &c. only because they wanted power, censured and refuted. This contrary to the avow'd principles of honest Heathens.*

**H**OW much Christian Religion transcribed into the lives of its professors contributes to the happiness of men not only in their single and private capacities, but as to the publick welfare of humane societies, and to the common

common

common interests and conveniences of Part 3, mankind, we have already discovered in several instances; now because Magistracy and Civil Government is the great support and instrument of external peace and happiness, we shall in the last place consider how eminent the first Christians were for their **Submission** and **Subjection to Civil Government**. And certainly there's scarce any particular instance wherein Primitive Christianity did more triumph in the world, than in their exemplary obedience to the Powers and Magistrates, under which they lived; honouring their persons, revering their power, paying their tribute, obeying their Laws, where they were not evidently contrary to the Laws of *Christ*, and where they were, submitting to the most cruel penalties they laid upon them with the greatest calmness and serenity of soul. The truth is, one great design of the *Christian Law* is to secure the interests of *civil Authority*; our *Saviour* has expressly taught us, *that we are to give unto Caesar the things that are Caesars, as well as unto God the things that are Gods*: And his Apostles spoke as plainly as words could speak it; *Let*

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every

Part 3. every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordain'd of God: Who-soever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation: Wherefore you must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake; for, for this cause pay you tribute also, for they are Gods Ministers, attending continually upon this very thing: Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour: Where we may take notice both of the strictness and universality of the charge, and (what is mainly material to observe) this charge given the Romans at that time when Nero was their Emperour, who was not only an Heathen Magistrate, but the first persecutor of Christians, a man so prodigiously brutish and tyrannical, that the world scarce ever brought forth such another monster, *ὁ γένει ἐν ποσὶ ἀνθρώπου*, as the Orator truly styles him, a beast in the shape of a man. The same Apostle amongst other directions given to Titus for the discharge of his office, bids him put the people in mind to be subject to principalities and

Themist. O.  
rat. 5. p.  
134.

and powers, and to obey Magistrates. S. Part 3. Peter deliversthe same doctrine to a tittle, Submit your selves to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well; for so is the will of God, that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

Such are the commands; and such was the practice of Christ and his Apostles. When a tax was demanded of him, though he was the Son of God, he refused not to pay tribute unto Cæsar, even when it put him to the expence and charges of a miracle: When arraigned for his life at Pilat's bar, he freely owned his authority, and cheerfully submitted to that wicked and unrighteous sentence, though able to command more than twelve Legions of Angels for his rescue and deliverance. The Apostles though unjustly scourged before the Council, yet made no tart reflections, but went away rejoicing. When Herod had cut off S. James his head, and consigned Peter in prison to the same butchery and execution, what arms did the Christians use, rise up and

Part 3. put him out of the throne, scatter *libels*, raise *tumults* or factions in the City? Oh no, the Churches weapons were *prayers* and *tears*, their only refuge in those evil times.

Nor did this excellent spirit die with the *Apostles*; we find the same temper ruling in the succeeding Ages of Christianity: The Christians (says one of the *Antients*) obey the Laws that are made, and by the exactness of their lives go *beyond* that accuracy which the Law requires of them; they love all men, though all men study to afflict and persecute them. Are there any (as *Athenagoras* concludes his address to the *Emperours*) more devoted to you than we? who pray for the happiness of your Government, that according to right and equity the *Son* may succeed his *Father* in the Empire, that your dominions may be enlarged, and that all things may prosper that you take in hand; and this we do, as that which turns both to yours and our own advantage, that so *under you leading a quiet and peaceable life*, we may cheerfully obey all those commands which you lay upon us. *S. Polycarp* a little before his Martyrdom wrote to the *Christians*

*J. Mart. Epist. ad Diogn. p. 497.*

*Leg. pro Christian. p. 39.*

*Apud Euseb. lib. 3. c. 36. p. 108.*

at

at *Philippi*, earnestly exhorting them Part 3. all to obey their Rulers, and to exercise all patience and long-suffering towards them; and when he stood before the *Proconsul*, he told him, that this *Ibid. lib. 4. c. 15. p. 132.* was the great Law of *Christianity*, that we are commanded by God to give all due honour and obedience to Princes and Potentates, such as is not *prejudicial* to us *i. e.* (for so doubtless he means) such as is not *contrary* to the principles of our Religion. *Tertullian* tells us 'twas a *Apol. c. 39. p. 31.* solemn part of the *Church-service* in his time to pray for the happiness and prosperity of the Princes under whom they lived: *We pray* (says he) *for the Emperours, for the Grandees and Ministers of State, for the prosperity of the Age, for the quietness of affairs, for the continuance of their lives and Government; that God would give them a long life, a secure reign, an undisturbed house, powerful Armies, faithful Senators, honest Subjects, a quiet people, and indeed what-ever they can wish for, either as men or Emperours.* They that think (says he) that we are not *Ibid. c. 31.* solicitous about the *safety* of Princes, let them look into the commands of God recorded in our *Scriptures*, which we freely expose to the view of all;

X 3

there

Part 3. there they'll find that we are enjoyn'd to pray for the *happineſſ* of our very *enemies* and persecutors; and who are so much such as they? And yet we are plainly and particularly commanded to pray for *Kings, for Princes, and all that are in authority, that the ſtate of things may be quiet and peaceable*; a Christian being an *enemy to no man*, is much leſſ ſo to his *Prince*. Thus when *Ceſus* ſeemed to object as if the *Chriſtians* refused to help the *Emperours* in their wars, *Origen* answers that they did really aſſiſt and help him, and that rather with *divine* than *humane* weapons, according to the command of the *Apoſtle*, *I exhort that firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for Kings and all that are in authority*: And he tells him that the more eminent any man is for piety and Religion, he will be able to afford greater aſſiſtance to his Prince, than a great many armed Souldiers, that ſtand ready to fight for him, and to deſtroy his enemies.

For all *cuſtoms* and *tributes* none ever paid them more freely than they. For your *taxes* and *tributes* (ſays *Juſtin Martyr* to the *Emperours*) we are above  
all

Lit. 8.p.  
426.

Apol. 2.p.  
64.

all other men every where ready to Part 3.  
bring them in to your Collectors and Officers, being taught ſo to do by our great Maſter, who bad thoſe that asked the queſtion whether they might pay tribute unto *Ceſar*, *To give unto Ceſar the things that are Ceſars, and unto God the things that are Gods*: For which reaſon we worſhip none but God; and as for you in all other things we chearfully ſerve you, acknowledging you to be *Emperours* and Governours of men, and praying, that together with your Imperial Power you may have a wiſe and diſcerning judgement and underſtanding. If the *Emperour* command me to pay tribute (ſays another of their *Apologiſts*) I am ready to do it; if my *Lord* command me to ſerve and obey him, I confeſs my obligation to it: Man is to be ſerv'd with that reſpect that is due to man: but God only who is inviſible and incomprehenſible is to be *religiously* fear'd and honour'd: if commanded to deny him, I muſt diſ-obey, and die rather than be found perfidions and ingrateful to him. So *Tertullian* tells them, that although they refused to pay the taxes rated upon them for maintenance of

Tatian.  
Orat. contr.  
Græc. p.  
144.

Apol. c. 42.  
p. 34.

Part 3. the *Heathen-temples*, yet for all other tributes they had cause to give the *Christians* thanks for so faithfully paying what was due, it being their principle to abstain from defrauding of others; insomuch, that should they examine their accounts how much of the assessments was lost by the fraud and couzenage of them of their own party, they would easily find that the *Christians* denial to pay that one tax was abundantly compensated and made up in their honest payment of all the rest. The truth is, they were admirably exact and conscientious as in all their actions, so especially in those that related to the publick, and concern'd their duty and obedience to their rulers and governours.

Nor were they thus only in *Prosperous* times but under the heaviest persecutions, as indeed the rod was seldom off their backs: The last mentioned *Apologist* bids their Judges go on to butcher them, and tells them they did but force those *Souls* out of their *Bodies*, which were praying to God for the Emperours happiness, even while their Officers were doing of it. And *Cyprian* tells the *Proconsul*, that as badly

Cap. 30. p.  
27.

Ad. Demetri-  
trian. p.  
202.

ly as they were used, yet they ceased Part 3.  
not to pray for the overthrow and expulsion of the common enemies, for seasonable showers, and either for the removing or mitigating publick evils, begging of God day and night with the greatest instance and importunity for the peace and safety of their persecutors, endeavouring to pacifie and propitiate God who was angry with the iniquities of the age. Nor were they thus kind and good natur'd; thus submissive and patient for want of power, and because they knew not how to help it: *Tertullian* answers in *Apol. c. 37.* this case, that if they thought it lawful to *return evil for evil*, they could in *one night* with a few *firebrands* plentifully revenge themselves; that they were no small and inconsiderable party, and that they needed not betake themselves to the little arts of skulking revenges, being able to appear in the capacity of open enemies; that though but of yesterdays standing, yet they had filled all places, all *Offices* of the Empire; and what wars were not they able to manage, who could so willingly give up themselves to be slain? did not the law of Christianity oblige



Part 3. oblige them to be *killed* rather than to *kill*; nay, that they need not take up arms and rebel, for their party was so *numerous*, that should they but agree together to leave the *Roman Empire*, and to go into some remote corner of the world, the loss of so many members would utterly ruine it, and they would stand amaz'd and affrighted at that solitude and desolation that would ensue upon it, and have more *enemies* than loyal *Subjects* left amongst them; whereas now they had the fewer *enemies* for having so many *Christians*.

The Christians then opposed not their enemies with the points of their *swords*, but with solid *Arguments*, and mild intreaties. Thus when *Julian* the *Emperour* urg'd his army, which was almost wholly made up of *Christians*, to wicked counsels, and the practices of idolatry, they withstood him only with *prayers and tears*, accounting this (*says my Author*) to be the *only* remedy against persecution. So far were they from resisting or rebelling, that they could quietly *dye* at the *Emperours* command, even when they had power lying at their foot. I cannot in this place omit the memorable instance of

Nag. in-  
veB. 1. in  
Julian, p.  
94.

of the *Thebean Legion*, being so ex- Part 3.  
ceedingly apposite and pertinent to my  
purpose, and so remarkable as no age *Martyr.*  
can furnish out such another instance; *SS. Mau-*  
I shall set down the story intirely out of *ricii & so-*  
the *Author* himself, the account of *cior. abEu-*  
their martyrdom written by *Eucherius* *cher. Lug-*  
Bishop of *Lyons*, who assures us he re- *dunens.*  
ceived the relation from very credible *conscript.*  
hands; and it is thus: *apud Suri-*  
*um ad diem*  
*22. Sept.*  
*p. 220 &c.*  
*Edit. Co-*  
*lon. 1618.*

*Maximianus Cæsar* (whom *Dioclesian* had lately taken to be his Colleague in the *Empire*) a bad man, and a bitter persecutor of the *Christians*, was sent into *France* to suppress a mutiny and rebellion risen there; to strengthen his Army there was added to it a band of *Christians* called the *Thebean Legion*, consisting according to the manner of the *Romans* of *six thousand six hundred sixty six* faithful, expert and resolute Souldiers. Coming to *Octodurus* (a place in *savoy*) and being ready to offer sacrifice to the gods, he causes his Army to come together, and commands them under a great penalty to swear by the *Altars* of their gods, that they would unanimously fight against their enemies, and persecute the *Christians* as enemies to the gods; which the *Thebean*

Part 3. *be an Legion* no sooner understood, but they presently withdrew to *Agannum* (a place eight miles off, call'd at this day *S. Mauritzs*, from *Mauricius* the Commander of the *Legion*; a place equally *pleasant* and *strong*, being encompassed about with craggy and inaccessible rocks) to avoid if it might be the wicked and sacrilegious command, and to refresh themselves, tyred with so long a march; but the Emperour taking notice of the Army as they came to swear, quickly miss'd the *Legion*, and being angry, sent Officers to them to require them forthwith to do it; who enquiring what it was that they were commanded to do, were told by the messengers, that all the Souldiers had offered sacrifices, and had taken the forementioned oath, and that *Cæsar* commanded them to return presently and do the like: To whom the heads of the Legion mildly answered, That for this reason they left *Octodurus*, because they had heard they should be forced to sacrifice, that being *Christians*, and that they might not be defiled with the Altars of *Devils*, they thought themselves oblig'd to worship the *living God*, and to keep that Religion

gion which they had entertain'd in the Part 3. *East*, to the last hour of their life: that as they were a *Legion* they were ready to any service of the war; but to return to him to commit sacrilege as he commanded, they could not yield.

With this Answer the messengers returned, and told the *Emperour*, that they were resolved not to obey his Commands, who being transported with anger, began thus to vent his passion: *Do my Souldiers think thus to sleight my Royal Orders, and the holy Rites of my Religion? Had they only despised the Imperial Majesty it would have call'd for publick vengeance, but together with the contempt of me, an affront is offered to Heaven, and the Roman Religion is as much despised as I am. Let the obstinate Souldiers know, that I am not only able to vindicate my self, but to revenge the quarrel of my gods. Let my faithful Servants make haste, and dispatch every tenth man according as the fatal lot shall fall upon him: By this equal death let those whose lot it shall be to die first, know, how able Maximian is severely to revenge both himself and his gods.* With that the command is given, the *Executioners* sent, the Emperours pleasure

Part 3. pleasure made known, and every *tenth* man is put to death; who chearfully offer'd their necks to the Executioners, and the only contention amongst them was, who should *first* undergo that glorious death. This done, the *Legion* is commanded to return to the rest of the Army. Whereupon *Mauritius* the General of the *Legion*, calling it a little aside, thus bespake them; I congratulate (most excellent *fellow-souldiers*) your *courage* and valour, that for the love of Religion, the command of *Cæsar* has made no impression upon you; you have seen your fellow-souldiers, with minds full of joy, undergoing a glorious death: how much afraid was I, lest being arm'd (and how easie is it for such to do so) you should under a pretence of *defending* them have endeavour'd to *hinder* their happy funerals:—See, I am encompassed round with the bodies of my fellow-souldiers, whom the dismal Executioner has torn from my side; I am besprinkled with the blood of the *Saints*, my clothes died with the reliques of their sacred blood; and shall I doubt to follow their *death*, whose *example* I so much congratulate and admire? Shall I concern my self to think

Part 3. think what the *Emperour* commands, who is equally subject to the same law of mortality with my self? — I remember we once took this *Military Oath*, that with the utmost hazard of our lives we would defend the Common-Wealth; this we then engaged to the *Emperours*, though no *Heavenly Kingdom* was promised to us; and if we could promise this out of devotion to a *Military* service, what then is to be done, when *Christ* promises so much to them that engage with him? Let us willingly expose our lives to this most precious death; let us shew a masculine courage, and an unviolated faith. Methinks I see those blessed souls standing before *Christ's* tribunal, whom the *Emperours* Officer just now banished out of their bodies: that's the true glory which will recompence the shortness of this life with a blessed eternity: Let us by the Messengers unanimously return this Answer to the Emperour; *We acknowledge, Cæsar, that we are your souldiers, and took up Arms for defence of the Empire; nor did we ever basely betray our trust, or forsake our station, or deserv'd that the brand either of fear or cowardise should be set upon us; nor should*

Part 3. *Should we stick now to obey your Commands, did not the Laws of Christianity, wherein we have been instructed, forbid us to worship devils, and to approach the polluted altars of the gods. We understand you are resolved either to defile us with sacrilegious worship, or to terrifie us with a decimation: Spare any further search concerning us, know we are all Christians, our bodies we yield subject to your Power, but our souls we reserve intire for Christ the Author and the Saviour of them.*

This was no sooner spoken, and universally agreed to by the *Legion*, but it was carried to the *Emperour*, who exasperated with such a generous resolution, commanded a *second decimation*, which was immediately executed, and the rest as before commanded to return to *Othodurus*; hereupon *Exuperius* the *Ensign* catching up his colours, thus address'd himself to them; You see me, *most excellent fellow-souldiers*, holding these *Ensigns* of secular warfare; but these are not the *arms* that I call you to, these are not the wars to which I excite your courage and valour; 'tis another kind of fighting that we are to chuse; they are not these *swords* that

that must make our way into the *Heavenly Kingdom*; we stand in need of an undaunted mind, an invincible defence, a maintaining the Faith which we have given to God, to the very last. — Let the dismal Executioner go and carry this message to his bloody Master, and tell him thus: We are, O *Emperour*, your *Souldiers*, but withall (which we freely confess) the *Servants of God*; to you we owe military service, to him *innocency*; from you we have received *wages* for our labours, from him we had our very *lives* and *beings*: we cannot herein obey the *Emperour*, so as to *deny* God, the author of our lives, yea and of yours too, whether you will or no. Nor is it, Sir, any despair (which is always stoutest in greatest straits) that makes us thus resolute against you; we have, you see, *armes*, and yet make no resistance, chusing rather to *dye* than to *overcome*, and desirous rather to perish *innocent*, than to live *rebellious* and revengeful: If you have a mind to appoint us to any greater and severer torments, we are ready for them. *Christians* we are, and therefore cannot persecute those that are so. You must needs acknowledge  
Y the

Part 3. the unconquerable courage of this *Legion*; we throw down our arms, your officer will find our right hands naked, but our breast arm'd with a true Catholick Faith: kill us, and trample on us, we undauntedly yield our necks to the Executioners sword; these things are the more pleasant to us, while setting light by your sacrilegious attempts, we hasten apace to the Heavenly Crown.

*Maximianus* being told this, and despairing now to break their constancy, commands his whole Army to fall upon them and cut them off, which they did accordingly without any difference of age or person, mangling their bodies, and then taking the spoyles, the *Emperour* having so appointed, that whoever kill'd any of the *Legion*, should have the spoyles of him whom he killed. And thus they died with their swords in their hands, when they might have preserved their lives (especially in a place so advantageous) by force of arms, or to be sure have sold them at the dearest rate. This story I have been willing to set down the more at large, because so remarkable in all its circumstances, and containing the

the most unparallel'd instance of Christian Piety and submission (next to that of our blessed *Saviour*) that I think was ever known to the world.

This is the account of those *Noble Martyrs*; only to prevent mistakes we are to take notice, that there was another *Mauritius* Commander of a *Legion* in the *East* (mentioned in the *Greek Menologies*) who together with seventy of his Souldiers were condemned by, and suffered under this self same Emperour *Maximianus*, for refusing to do sacrifice; their Martyrdom being recorded by *Simeon Metaphrastes*; but the account quite different both as to persons and things from that which is here related.

By what has been said we may see the injustice of that charge which the *Heathens* sometimes laid upon the *Christians*, that they were *disturbers* of the Peace, and *enemies* to Civil Government; an indictment so purely false, and without any shadow of a real pretence to cover it, that the *ingenious* Heathen in *Minutius Felix* (though raking up all the calumnies he could find, and putting the deepest dye upon every charge which wit and eloquence

*Menol.*  
*Græc. 20*  
*μερ. 25*  
*Ιωλ. sub*  
*lit. λ.*

*Apud Sur.*  
*ad diem 8*  
*Jul. 10m.*

4.

Part 3. could put upon it, yet I had not the face so much as once to mention it. But however, as groundless as it was, they were frequently charg'd with it. Sometimes they were accused of *dis-loyalty* and treason, either because they would not *swear* by the Emperours *Genius*, or not sacrifice for his *safety*, or not worship the *Emperours* as *Divi*, or gods, or not celebrate their *festivals* in the same way with others. For the first, their refusing to *swear* by the Emperours *Genius*, we have heard before what *Tertullian* answers to it, That it was in effect to give *divine* honour to *devils*. To the second, their not *sacrificing* for the Emperours *safety*, he answers, That none *sacrificed* to so good purpose as they, for that they offered up prayers to the True, Living and Eternal God for the safety of the *Emperours*, that God whom the *Emperours* themselves did above all others desire should be propitious and favourable to them, as from whom they knew they deriv'd their government. For the third, their refusing to own the *Emperours* for *gods*, he tells them, they could not do it, partly because they would not *lye* in saying so, partly because they durst not

*Apol. c. 30.*  
p. 27.

*Ibid. c. 33.*  
p. 28 *Vid.*  
*Theoph. Antioch. lib. 1.*  
p. 76.

by

by doing it *mock* and deride the *Em- Part 3.*  
*perour*, nay, that he himself would not be willing to be styled *God*, if he remembered that he was a *Man*, it being mans interest to yield to God; that the title of *Emperour* was great enough, and that he could not be call'd *God*, without being denied to be *Emperour*; that he was therefore *great*, because *less* than Heaven; and that if he would needs be a *deity*, he must first conquer *Heaven*, lead *God* in triumph, set *Guards* in Heaven, and impose *tribute* upon that place. For the last, their not observing the solemn *festivals* of the *Emperours*, for which they were ac- *Ibid. c. 35.*  
counted enemies to the publick, they p. 28.  
pleaded that their religion and their conscience could not comply with that *vanity*, that *luxury*, and *debauchery*, and all manner of excess and wickedness that was committed at those times; that the publick *joy* was expressed by that which was a publick *disgrace*, and those things accounted *honourable* upon the solemn days of *Emperours*, which were *unfit* and uncomely to be done upon any days; and that there was little reason they should be accused for not observing that, where *looseness* of manners was accounted

Part 3. accounted *loyalty*, and the occasion of *luxury* a part of *Religion*.

Otherwhiles they were accused of *sedition*, and holding *unlawful combinations*, which arose upon the account of their religious Assemblies, which their enemies beheld as *societies* erected contrary to the *Roman Laws*. That we may the better apprehend what these *societies* were (in the number whereof they reckoned the *Christian meetings*) and how condemned by the *Roman Laws*, we are to know, that in the infancy of the *Roman Commonwealth*, *Numa Pompilius*, to take away the difference between the *Sabines* and the *Romans*, divided the people into *Colledges* and little Corporations (answerable to which are our *City-Companies*) according to their several *trades* and occupations, *Goldsmiths*, *Dyers*, *Potters*, *Curriers*, &c. which together

with the *City* increased to a great number; (*Panciroll* out of both *Codes* gives us an account of thirty six) to these he assigned their several *Halls*, times of meeting, and sacred rites, and such immunities as were most proper for them. But besides these appointed by Law, several *Colledges* in imitation

Plut. in  
vit. Num.  
p. 71.

Append. ad  
Notit. Im-  
per. fol.  
197.

Part 3. on of them were erected in most parts of the *Empire*, partly for the more convenient dispatch of business, but principally for the maintenance of mutual love and friendship. All these *Societies* had their solemn meetings, and customary *feasts*, which in time degenerated into great excess and luxury, insomuch that *Verra* in his time complained that the excess and prodigality of their suppers made provisions dear; and much more reason had \**Tertullian* to complain of it in his time. Answerable to these *Colledges* amongst the *Romans*, were the *ἐταῖαι* or *societies* amongst the *Grecians*, who also had their stated and common feasts, such were the *Ἀνδρεία* amongst the *Cretians*, the *Συστία* at *Lacedæmon*, and so in other States of *Greece*. But these meetings (those of them especially that were not settled either by the decree of the *Senate*, or the constitution of the Prince) partly by reason of their number, and the great confluence to them, partly by reason of their luxurious feasting, began to be looked upon by the State with a jealous eye, especially after that the *Commonwealth* was turned into a *Monarchy*, the Empe-

Collegio-  
rum cœna  
immutabi-  
les inten-  
dunt anno-  
nam. Var.  
apud Jac.  
Göthfr. in  
c. Th. lib.  
25. Tit. 10.  
l. 20.  
\* Apol. c.  
39. p. 32.

Part 3. rours beholding them as fit *Nurseries* to  
*Vid. lib. 47.* plant and breed up treasonable and re-  
*ff. Tit. 32.* bellious designs, and therefore frequent-  
*de Colleg.* ly forbad them under very severe pe-  
*& Corporib.* nalties. Thus *Julius Caesar*, who first  
laid the foundation of the Empire, re-  
duced these *Colledges* to the antient  
standard, putting down all that were  
*Sueton. in* supernumerary and *illegal*; wherein he  
*vit. Jul.* was also followed by his Successour *An-*  
*Ces. c. 42.* *gustus*; and the succeeding Emperours  
*p. 50, in* very often put out strict *Edicts* against  
*August. c.* them, prohibiting them as *dangerous*  
*32. p. 155.* and *unlawful* combinations.

Under the notions of these *societies*,  
it was, that the *Christian* Congregati-  
ons came to be forbidden; several per-  
sons confederated into a combination,  
and constantly meeting at a common  
feast rendring them suspicious to their  
enemies. Hence *Pliny* giving the Em-  
perour an account of the *Christians*,  
and especially of their assembling at  
their solemn feasts of love, tells him,  
that they had forborn ever since ac-  
cording to his command, he had pub-  
lished an *Edict* to forbid the *hetariae* or  
*societies*. And indeed the *Christian*  
Assemblies, whereat they usually had  
the *Lords Supper* and their *Love-feasts*,  
looking

*Lib. 10.*  
*Epist. 97.*

looking somewhat like those *illegal* Part 3.  
meetings (especially as beheld with  
the eye of an *enemy*) it was the less  
wonder, if the Heathens accused them  
of hatching treason, and the Magistrates  
proceeded against them as contemnners  
and violaters of the Law.

But to this the *Christians* answered,  
that their *meetings* could not be ac-  
counted amongst the *unlawful factions*,  
having nothing common with them; *Tertull. A-*  
that indeed the wisdom and provi- *pol. c. 38. p.*  
dence of the State had justly prohibi- *30.*  
ted such factions to prevent seditions,  
which might thence easily over-run  
and disquiet all Councils, Courts,  
pleadings, and all meetings whatsoever.  
But no such thing could be suspected  
of the *Christian* Assemblies, who were  
frozen as to any *ambitious designs* of  
honour or dignity, strangers to nothing  
more than publick affairs, and had re-  
nounced all pretences to *external*  
*pomps* and pleasures: That if the *Chri-*  
*stian* Assemblies were like others, there *Ibid. c. 39.*  
would be some reason to condemn *p. 32.*  
them under the notion of factions; but  
to whose prejudice (*say they*) did we  
ever *meet* together? we are the same  
when *together*, that we are when *asun-*  
*der*;



# 346 Primitive Christianity. Ch. 4.

Part 3. *der*; the same *united*, as is every single person, hurting no man, grieving no man; and therefore that when such honest, good, pious, and chaste men met together, it was rather to be called a *Council* than a *Faction*. To which *Ori-*

*Contr. Cels. lib. 1. p. 5.* *gen* adds, That seeing in all their meetings they sought nothing but truth, they could not be said to conspire against the *Laws*, seeing they designed nothing but to get from under the power and tyranny of the *devil*; who had procured those *Laws* only to establish his Empire faster in the world. For

*Lib. 3. p. 115.*

elsewhere he bids *Celsus* or any of his party shew any thing that was *seditions* amongst the *Christians*: that their Religion arose not at first (as he falsely charg'd it) out of sedition, might appear in that their *Legislator* had so severely forbidden killing and murder, and that the *Christians* would never have entertained such mild *Laws*, as gave their enemies opportunity to kill them like sheep delivered to the slaughter without making the least resistance. Thus *Arnobius* confidently challenges the *Heathens* whether they could reject *Christianity* upon the account of its raising wars, tumults, and seditions

*Adv. Gent. lib. 2. p. 20.*

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Part 3. seditions in the world. No, those were things which they might find nearer home: You *defame* us (says *Tertullian*) with treason against the *Emperour*, and yet never could any *Albinians*, *Nigrians*, or *Cassians* [persons that had mutinied and rebelled against the Emperours] be found amongst the *Christians*; they are those that swear by the Emperours *genii*, that have offered sacrifices for their safety, that have often condemned *Christians*, these are the men that are found traitors to the *Emperours*: A Christian is *no* man's enemy, much less his *Princes*; knowing him to be constituted by God, he cannot but love, revere, and honour him, and desire that he and the whole *Roman* Empire may be safe, as long as the world lasts. We worship the *Emperour* as much as is either *lawful* or *expedient*, as one that is next to God; we *sacrifice* for his safety, but 'tisto his and our God; and so as he has commanded, *only* by holy prayer; for the great God needs no blood or sweet perfumes, these are the *banquets* and repast of *devils*, which we do not only reject, but *expel* at every turn. But to say more concerning this, were to light

*Ad Scap. c. 2. p. 69.*

Part 3. a candle to the sun. *Julian* the Empe-  
Παλιὰ τῆς  
 οὐδ' βασιλέ-  
 α ἐπιδείκνυ-  
 ται ὅτι αὐτὴ  
 καὶ μὲν καὶ  
 ἀσέβεια. Ἰου-  
 λ. Fragm.  
 Epist. Oper.  
 p. 1. p. 528.  
 rour though no good friend to *Christi-  
 ans*, yet thus far does them right, that  
 if they see any one *mutinying* against  
 his *Prince*, they presently *punish* him  
 with great severities.

And here we may with just reason  
 reflect upon the iniquity of the Church  
 of *Rome*, which in this instance of Reli-  
 gion has so abominably debauched the  
 purity and simplicity of the *Christian*  
 faith: For they not only exempt the  
*Clergy* where they can, from the autho-  
 rity and judgment of the *secular* pow-  
 ers, whereby horrible enormities do a-  
 rise, but generally teach, that a Prince  
 once *excommunicate*, his Subjects are  
 absolv'd from all fealty and allegiance,  
 and he may with impunity be deposed  
 or made away. How shall such a Prince  
 be thundred against with curses and de-  
 privations, every bold and treacherous  
*Priest* be authorized to brand his sa-  
 cred person with the odious names of  
*Infidel*, *Heretick* and *Apostate*, and be  
*Apostolically* licensed to slander and  
*belibel* him, and furnished with Com-  
 missions to free his Subjects from their  
 duty and allegiance, and to allure them  
 to take up arms against him? And if  
 these

these courses fail, and men still conti- Part 3.  
 nue loyal, they have disciples ready by  
*secret* or *sudden* arts to send him out of  
 the world. And if any man's consci-  
 ence be so nice as to boggle at it, his  
 scruples shall be removed, at worst it  
 shall pass for a *venial* crime, and the  
*Pope* perhaps (with the help of a limi-  
 tation that it be done for the interest  
 of the *Catholic* cause) by his *omnipot-  
 ence* shall create it meritorious.

Cardinal *Bellarmino* (whose wit and  
 learning were employed to uphold a  
 tottering cause) maintains it stiffly, and  
 in express terms, that if a *King* be an  
*Heretick* or an *Infidel* (and we know  
 what they mean by that, nay he parti-  
 cularly names the *reformed* Princes of  
*England* amongst his instances) and  
 seeks to draw his Dominions unto his  
 Sect; it is not only *lawful*, but *necessa-  
 ry* to deprive him of his Kingdom.  
 And although he knew that the whole  
 course of antiquity would fly in the  
 face of so bold an assertion, yet he goes  
 on to assert, that the reason why the  
*Primitive Christians* did not attempt  
 this upon *Nero*, *Dioclesian*, *Julian* the  
*Apostate* and the like, was not out of  
*conscience*, or that they boggled out of

De Rom.  
 Pontif. lib.  
 5. c. 7. Col.  
 891.

Part 3. a sense of duty, but because they wanted *means* and power to effect it. A bold piece of falshood this, and how contrary to the plain and positive Laws of *Christ*, to the meek and *primitive* spirit of the Gospel! But by the *Cardinals* leave it could not be for want of power, for if, as *Seneca* observes, he may be *Master* of any man's life that *undervalues* his own, it was then as easie for a *Christian* to have slain *Nero* or *Dioclesian*, as it was of later times for *Gerard* to pistol the Prince of *Orange*, or *Ravillac* to stab the King of *France*. Nay, take one of his own instances, *Julian* the *Apostate*, a Prince bad enough, and that left no method unattempted to seduce his Subjects to *Paganism* and *Idolatry*, yet though the greatest part of his Army were *Christians*, they never so much as whispered a treasonable design against him, using no other *arms* (as we noted out of *Nazianzen*) but *prayers and tears*. Had *S. Paul* been of their mind, he would have told the *Christian Romans* quite another story, and instead of bidding them be subject to *Nero* not only for *wrath*, but for *conscience sake*, would have instructed them to take all opportunities

Epist. 4.  
pag. 9.

Part 3. tunities to have murdered or deposed him. But I shall not reckon up the villanies they have been guilty of in this kind, nor pursue the odious and pernicious consequences of their doctrine and practice; thus much I could not but take notice of, being so immediately opposite to the whole tenor of the Gospel, and so great a scandal to *Christianity*. And I verily believe that had the *Primitive Christians* been no better *Subjects*, than their *Emperours* were *Princes*, had they practised on them those bloody artifices which have been common amongst those that call themselves the only *Catholicks*, that barbarous dealing would have been a greater curb to the flourishing of the Gospel, than all the *ten* persecutions. For how could an impartial *Heathen* ever have believed their doctrine to have been of God, had their actions been so contrary to all principles of natural Divinity. Sure I am *Pagan Rome* was in this case more *Orthodox*, and their *Pontiffes* far better *Doctors* of Divinity: Their *Lex Julia* (as *Ulpian* their great Lawyer tells us) allotted the same penalty to *sacrilege* and *treason*; placing the one the very next step

Lib. 7. de  
offic. Pro-  
conf. in l.  
ff. ad leg.  
Jul. maj.

Part 3. step to the other; thereby teaching us that they looked upon treason against the Prince as an affront next to that which was immediately done against the Majesty of Heaven. And *Marcellus* the great Statesman in *Tacitus* lays it down for a *Maxim*, that *Subjects may wish for good Princes, but ought to bear with any*. And shame it is that any should call themselves *Christians*, and yet be found worse than they, their principles and practices more opposite to the known Laws of God and nature, more destructive to the peace and welfare of mankind.

*Hist. lib.*  
4. c. 8. p.  
489.

## CHAP. V.

### Of their Penance, and the Discipline of the Antient Church.

*This whylast treated of. The Church as a Society founded by Christ has its distinct Laws and Priviledges. What the usual offences that came under the Churches discipline. All immorality open, or confessed. Lapsing into Idolatry the great sin of those times. How many ways usually committed. The Traditores who, what their crime. What*

*Part 3.*  
*What penalties inflicted upon delinquent persons. Delivering over to Satan, what: this extraordinary coercive power why vested in the Church. The common and standing penalty by Excommunication. This practised amongst the antient Gauls: an account of it out of Cæsar. In use amongst the Jews. Thence derived to the Christians. This punishment how expressed by Church-writers: Managed according to the nature of the fault. The rigour of it sometimes mitigated. Delinquent Clergy-men degraded, and never admitted but to Lay-communication; instances of it. An account of the rise of Novatianism, and the severity of its principles; styl'd Cathari; condemn'd by the Synod at Rome. Offenders in what manner dealt with. The Procedure of the action described by Tertullian. Penitents how behaving themselves during their suspension. The greatest not spar'd; the case of Philippus and Theodosius. This severity why used. Penances called satisfactions, and why. The use of the word, satisfaction, in the antient Fathers. Penitents how absolved. After what time. In the power of Bishops*

*shops to extend or shorten the penitentiary humiliations. Four particular cases observed wherein the time of penance might be shortened. In what sence communion is denied by some antient Canons to penitents at the hour of death. This discipline administered primarily by Bishops. By his leave Presbyters and (in necessity) Deacons might absolve. The publick penitentiary when and why instituted; when and why laid aside. Penitents taken into communion by Martyrs and Confessors. This power abused to excess. Cyprian's complaint of the excessive numbers of Libells of peace granted by the Martyrs to the lapsed, without the knowledge of the Bishop. The form of these Pacifick Libells exemplified out of Cyprian; other sorts of Libells. The Libellatici who. Thurificati. Several sorts of Libellatici. The Libellatici properly so called. Their manner of address to the Heathen Magistrate to procure their exemption from sacrificing. That they did not privately deny Christ, proved against Baronius. The piety and purity of the Primitive Church matter of just admiration.*

Having

**H**AVING travelled through the several stages of the subject I had undertaken; I should here have ended my journey, but that there one thing remains, which was not properly reducible under any particular head, being of a general relation to the whole; and that is to consider what **Discipline** was used towards offenders in the antient Church; only premising this, that the Christian Church being founded and established by *Christ* as a *Society* and Corporation *distinct* from that of the Common-wealth, is by the very nature of its constitution (besides what positive ground and warrant there may be for it in *Scripture*) invested with an *inherent* power (besides what is borrowed from the *Civil* Magistrate) of censuring and punishing its members that offend against the Laws of it, and this in order to the maintaining its peace and purity. For without such a fundamental power as this, 'tis impossible that as a Society it should be able to subsist, the very nature of a community necessarily implying such a right inherent in it. Now for the better understanding what

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this

Part 3. this power was, and how exercised in the first Ages of the Church, we shall consider these four things: What were the usual *crimes* that came under the discipline of the antient Church; what *penalties* were inflicted upon delinquent persons; in what *manner* offenders were dealt with; and by *whom* this discipline was administred.

*First*, What the usual *crimes* and offences were which came under the discipline of the antient Church; in the general they were any offences against the *Christian* Law, any vice or *immorality* that was either *publick* in itself, or made known and made good to the Church. For the holy and good *Christians* of those times were infinitely careful to keep the honour of their Religion unspotted, to stifle every sin in its birth, and by bringing offenders to publick shame and penalty to keep them from propagating the malignant influence of a bad example. For this reason they watched over one another, told them *privately* of their faults and failures, and when that would not do, brought them before the *cognizance* of the Church. 'Tis needless to reckon up particular crimes, when none were

were spar'd. Only because in those Part 3. days by reason of the violent heats of persecution the great temptation which the weaker and more unsettled Christians were exposed to, was to *deny* their profession, and to offer *sacrifice* to the Heathen-gods, therefore lapsing into *Idolatry* was the most common sin that came before them, and of this they had very frequent instances, it being that which for some Ages mainly exercised the Discipline of the Church. This sin of Idolatry or denying *Christ* in those times was usually committed these three ways: Sometimes by exposing the *Scriptures* to the rage and malice of their enemies, which was accounted a virtual renouncing Christianity: This was especially remarkable under the *Diocletian* persecution in the *African* Churches. For *Diocletian* had put forth an *Edict* that *Christians* should deliver up their *Scriptures* and the Writings of the Church to be burnt. This command was prosecuted with great rigour and fierceness, and many Christians to avoid the storm delivered up their Bibles to the scorn and fury of their enemies. Hence they were styled *Traditores* (of whom

Part 3. there is frequent mention in *Optatus* and *S. Augustin*) with whom the *Orthodox* refusing to joyn after the persecution was over, the difference broke out into Schism and faction, and gave birth to that unhappy Sect of the *Donatists*, which so much exercised the Christian Church. Otherwhiles Christians became guilty of Idolatry by actual sacrificing, or worshipping Idols; these were called *Thurificati*, from their burning *incense* upon the altars of the Heathen Deities, and were the grossest and vilest sort of Idolaters. Others again fell into this sin by basely *corrupting* the Heathen Magistrate, and purchasing a *warrant* of security from him to exempt them from the penalty of the Law, and the necessity of sacrificing and denying *Christ*: These were called *Libellatici*, of whom we shall speak more afterwards.

*Secondly*, What *penalties* and punishments were inflicted upon delinquent persons, and they could be no other than such as were agreeable to the nature and constitution of the Church, which as it transacts only in *spiritual* matters, so it could inflict no other than *spiritual* censures and chastisements.

'Tis

'Tis true indeed that in the first Age Part 3. especially, the *Apostles* had a power to inflict *bodily* punishments upon offenders, which they sometimes made use of upon great occasions, as *S. Peter* did towards *Ananias* and *Saphira*, striking them dead upon the place for their notorious couzenage and gross hypocrisie: And *S. Paul* punished *Elymas* with blindness for his perverse and malicious opposition of the Gospel; and this doubtless he primarily intends by his *delivering over persons unto Satan*, for no sooner were they excommunicated and cut off from the body of the faithful, but *Satan* as the common *serjeant* and Jaylor seized upon them, and either by actual possessing, or some other sign upon their bodies made it appear that they were *delivered* over into his power. This could not but strike a mighty terrour into men, and make them stand in awe of the *censures* of the Church; and questionless the main design of the divine providence in affording this *extraordinary* gift was to supply the defect of civil and coercive power, of which the Church was then wholly destitute, and therefore needed some more than ordinary assistance

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especi-

Part 3. especially at its first constitution, some visible and *sensible* punishments to keep its sentence and determinations from being slighted by bold and contumacious offenders. How long this miraculous power lasted in the Church, I know not, or whether at all beyond the *Apostles* age. The common and standing penalty they made use of was *Excommunication* or suspension from communion with the Church; the cutting off and casting out an offending person as a *rotten* and infected member, till by repentance and wholesome discipline he was *cured* and restored, and then he was re-admitted into Church-society, and to a participation of the ordinances and privileges of Christianity.

This way of punishing by excommunication was not originally instituted by our Lord or his Apostles, but had been antiently practised both amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*. 'Twas commonly practised by the *Druids* (as *Cæsar* who lived amongst them informs us) who, when any of the people became irregular and disorderly, presently *suspended* them from their sacrifices. And the persons thus suspended were accounted

*De Bell.  
Gall. lib. 6.  
p. 135.*

counted in the number of the most *impious* and *execrable* persons: All men stood off from them, *shun'd* their company and converse as an *infection* and a plague: they had no benefit of *Law*, nor any *honour* or respect shewn to them; and of all *punishments* this they accounted most *extreme* and severe. So far he; giving an account of this Discipline amongst the antient *Gauls*. In the *Jewish* Church nothing was more familiar; their three famous degrees of Excommunication נידוי *Niddui*, חרם *Cherem*, שמתה *Shammatha*, are so commonly known, that 'twere impertinent to insist upon them. From the usage of the *Jewish* it was amongst other rites adopted into the *Christian* Church, practised by the *Apostles*, and the Churches founded by them (whereof we have instances in the *New Testament*) but brought to greater perfection in succeeding times. 'Tis *variously* expressed by the antient Writers, though much to the same purpose. Such persons are said *Abstineri*, to be kept back, a word much used by *Cyprian*, and the Synod of *Illiberis*; ἀποκείσθαι to be *separated*, or be separated from the body of *Christ*, as *S. Augustin* oft

oft



Part 3. oft expresses it, ἐκκληθεὶς τῆς κοινῆς  
 πάλιν, to be *wholly cut off* from  
 Can. 28. Communion, as 'tis in the *Apostolick*  
 Canons. Sometimes πάλιν ἐκ τῆς ἐκ-  
 Can. 28. κλησίας, as the *Laodicean* Synod calls it,  
 to be *thrown out* of the Church; to  
 be *anathematiz'd*, and without the  
 Communion and pale of the Church,  
 as the Fathers of the Council of *Gangra*  
 have it.

Epist. ad  
 Armen. E-  
 pisc. prefix.  
 Conc.  
 Gangr.

This suspension and the penance that  
 accompanied it was greater or less, long-  
 er or shorter according to the nature  
 of the crime, sometimes two, three, ten,  
 fifteen, twenty or thirty years, and  
 sometimes for the whole life; nay, in  
 some cases it was not taken off at death,  
 but persons were left to the judgment  
 of God, without any testimony of their  
 reconciliation to the Church. Though  
 herein the severity was mitigated, not  
 only by private Bishops, but by the  
 great Council of *Nice*, which ordain'd  
 that penitent persons should not be de-  
 nied the Communion at the *hour* of  
 death: of all which cases, or the most  
 material of them, we have in the fore-  
 going discourse produc'd particular in-  
 stances in their proper places. If the  
 person offending hapned to be in *Or-*  
*ders*,

*ders*, he forfeited his Ministry; and Part 3.  
 though upon his repentance he was re-  
 stored to Communion, yet it was only  
 as a *lay-person*, never recovering the ho-  
 nour and dignity of his office. Thus  
*Cornelius* Bishop of *Rome* giving *Fabius* Apud Eu-  
 feb. H. Ecc.  
 lib 6. c. 43.  
 of *Antioch* an account of the clancular  
 and *Schismatical* Ordination of *Nova-*  
*tian*, tells him, that one of the Bishops  
 that ordain'd him return'd after to the  
 Church, with tears bewailing his of-  
 fence, whom at the instance of the peo-  
 ple he receiv'd unto *Lay-communion*.  
 The same *Cyprian* writing about this Epist. 32.  
 p. 69.  
 very case relates of *Trophimus* (who  
 was either the very Bishop menti-  
 oned by *Cornelius*, or one of his Col-  
 leagues) that returning to the Church  
 with great demonstrations of repen-  
 tance, he was re-admitted, but no o-  
 therwise than in the capacity of a Lay-  
 man: and speaking elsewhere of *Basilides* Epist. 68.  
 p. 114.  
 his repentance, he tells us he had  
 no thoughts of retaining his Bishop-  
 rick, making account he was very  
 well dealt with, if upon his repentance  
 he might but communicate as a *Laick*,  
 and be received amongst the number  
 of the *Faithful*. This *S. Basil* tells us  
 was an ancient *Canon* and practice of  
 the Epist. Can.  
 ad Amphil.  
 Can. 3. p.  
 22. vid.  
 Zonar. &  
 Balsam. in  
 Can. 10.  
 Conc. Ni-  
 cen.

Part 3. the Church, and accordingly ordains, that a *Deacon* guilty of fornication should be deposed from his office, and being thrust down into the rank of the *Laity*, should in that quality be admitted to Communion.

Indeed they strove by all ways imaginable to discourage sin, never thinking the curb strong enough, so they might but keep persons within the bounds of order and regularity; inso-much that by some the string was stretched too far, and all pardon denied to them that had sin'd. This uncomfortable doctrine was if not first coin'd, yet mainly vended by the *Novatian* party. For *Novatus* *S. Cyprians* Presbyter being suspended by him for his vile enormities fled over to *Rome*, and there joyn'd himself to *Novatian* a Presbyter of that Church (these two names are frequently confounded by the *Greek* Writers) who ambitiously sought to make himself Bishop, and to thrust out *Cornelius* newly elected into that See; but not being able to compass his design, between them they started this amongst other *heretical* opinions, that the lapsed who through fear of suffering had fallen in the time of per-

*Enseb. ubi  
supr. p. 242.  
Epiphan.  
Heres. 59.  
contr. Ca-  
tharos, p.  
214.*

persecution were not to be admitted Part 3. to repentance, and that though they should never so oft confess their sins, and never so sincerely forsake them, yet there was no hope of salvation for them, at least-wise (for so I incline to understand them) that it was not in the power of the *Church* to absolve or give them any hopes of pardon, leaving them to the judgment of God; styling themselves (and not only as *Balsamon* affirms, ironically styl'd by others) by the name of *Cathari*, the pure and undefiled party. But they were herein presently condemned by a *Synod* of sixty Bishops, and more than as many Presbyters and Deacons gathered at *Rome* (and the Decree consented to and published by the rest of the Bishops in their several Provinces) concluding that *Novatus* and his party, and all that had subscribed to his most *inhumane* and merciless Opinion, should be cast out of the Church; and that the brethren who in that sad calamity had fallen from their profession, should be healed and restored by the arts and methods of repentance. Which brings us to consider,<sup>1<sup>st</sup></sup>

*In Can. 8.  
Conc. Nic.  
cen.*

*Thirdly,*

Part 3. *Thirdly*, How and in what manner offenders were dealt with, both as to their *suspension* and *penance*, and as to their *absolution*. This affair was usually managed after this order; At their publick assemblies (as we find in *Tertulian*) amongst other parts of their holy exercises, there were exhortations, reproofs, and a *divine censure*; for the judgment is given with great weight, as amongst those that are sure that God beholds what they do; and this is one of the highest *preludiums* and fore-runners of the *judgment* to come, when the delinquent person is banished from the *Communion* of *Prayers*, *Assemblies*, and all holy *Commerce*. By this passage we clearly see, that the first thing in this solemn action was to make *reproofs* and *exhortations*, thereby to bring the offender to the sight and acknowledgement of his faults; then the *sentence* or *censure* was passed upon him, whereby he was suspended, not only from the Communion of the Holy *Eucharist*, but from all holy commerce in any (especially *publick*) duty of religion. We cannot imagine, that, in every person that stood under this capacity, a *formal* sentence was always denounced against

Apoc. 39.  
p. 31.

Part 3. against him, it being many times sufficient that the fact he had done was evident and *notorious*, as in the case of the *lapsed* that had offered sacrifice, for in this case the offender was look'd upon as *ipso facto* excommunicate, and all religious commerce forborn towards him. 'Tis true, that in some cases the *Martyrs* (as we shall see more anon) finding such *lapsed* persons truly penitent did receive them into *private* Communion, so did those Martyrs *Dionysius Alexandrinus* speaks of in his Letter to *Fabius* Bishop of *Antioch*, they took the penitents that had fallen into idolatry into their company, and Communicated with them both at *Prayers* and *Meals*; but to *publick* Communion they were never admitted till they had exactly fulfilled the discipline of the Church, which principally consisted in many severe acts of repentance and mortification, more or less according to the nature of the offence.

Enseb. H.  
Eccl. lib. 6.  
c. 42. p.  
241.

During this space of penance they appeared in all the formalities of sorrow and mourning, in a sordid and squalid habit, with a sad countenance, and a head hung down, with tears in their eyes, standing without at the

Tert. de pœ-  
nitent. c. 9.  
p. 127.  
Vid. Enseb.  
lib. 5. c. 28.  
p. 197.

Church

Part 3. *Church doors*, (for they were not suffered to enter in) falling down upon their knees to the Ministers as they went in, and begging the prayers of all good *Christians* for themselves, with all the expressions and demonstrations of a sorrowful and dejected mind; reckoning the lower they lay in repentance, the higher it would exalt them; the more sordid they appeared, the more they should be cleansed and purified; the less they spared themselves, the more God would spare them: at these times also they made open confession of their faults, this being accounted the very spring of repentance, and without which they concluded it could not be real, *Out of confession* (says *Tertullian*) *is born repentance, and by repentance God is pacified*; and therefore without this neither riches nor honour would procure any admission into the Church.

*Ibid.*

*Ibid. lib. 6.  
c. 34. p.  
232.*

Thus *Eusebius* reports, that when *Philippus* the Emperour would have gone in with the rest of the *Christians* upon *Easter-eve* to have partaked of the prayers of the Church, the Bishop of the place would by no means suffer it, unless he first made confession of his sins, and passed through the order of the

the *Penitents*, being guilty of very great and enormous sins; which 'tis said he very willingly submitted to, testifying by his actions his real and religious fear of the Divine Majesty. This story, though as to the main of it, it might be true, yet as fastened upon *Philip* the Emperour, I have formerly shewed it to be false, and that it's rather meant of one *Philippus* who was Governour in *Egypt*, and professed himself a *Christian*; but however this was, 'tis certain that a person as great as he, *Theodosius* the Great, for his bloody and barbarous slaughter of the *Thessalonians* was by *S. Ambrose* Bishop of *Millain* suspended, brought to publick confession, and forced to undergo a severe course of penance for eight months together; when after great demonstrations of a hearty sorrow, and sincere repentance, not more rigidly imposed upon him, than readily and willingly received by him, after his usual prostrations in the Church (as if unworthy either to stand or kneel) crying out in the words of *David*, *My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word*, after having oft torn his hair, beat his forehead, water'd his cheeks with tears,

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Part 3. and humbly beg'd peace and pardon, he was absolved, and restored to Communion with the Church; of which passage they who would know more, may find the story largely related by

H. Eccl. lib. Theodoret.  
5. c. 15.

This severity was used towards offenders, partly to make them more sensible of their sins, partly to affright and deter others, but principally to give *satisfaction* both to God and his Church concerning the reality and sincerity of their repentance. Hence it is that these *Penances*, in the Writings of those times are so often called *satisfactions*; for whenever those Fathers use the word, 'tis either with respect to *men* or *God*; if to *men*, then the meaning is, that by these external acts of sorrow and mortification they *satisfie* the Church of their repentance, and make reparation for those offences and scandals which they had given by their sins: If to *God*, then 'tis taken for the acknowledgement of a mans fault, and the begging of pardon and remission: Thus *Cyprian* speaking of the state of impenitent sinners, aggravates it by this, that they do *peccare*,

Aug. Enchirid. c. 65. tom. 3.

De Laps p. 177.

*care, nec satisfacere*, sin, but make no Part 3. satisfaction, *i. e.* (as in the very next words he explains it) they do not *peccata desere*, confess and bewail their sins; and before, discoursing about Gods being the only object of tears and sorrow for sin, which is to be addressed to God and not man, he tells us 'tis God that is to be appeased by satisfaction, that he being greatly offended is to be intreated by a long and full repentance, as being alone able to pardon those sins that are committed against him. So that the satisfaction which they reckon'd they made to God consisted in seeking to avert his displeasure, and to regain his forfeited favour by a deep contrition and sorrow for sin, by a real acknowledgement and forsaking of their faults, and by an humble giving to God the glory both of his mercy and his justice. Thence confession is called by *Tertullian* the *Counsel* or Intendment of satisfaction: And a little after he describes it thus; *Confession* (says he) *is that whereby we acknowledge our offence to God, not as if he were ignorant of it, but inasmuch as by confession satisfaction is forwarded, by confession repentance is produced, and by*

Ibid p. 173.

Tert. de penitent. c. 8. p. 126, 127

Part 3. *repentance God is appeased.* The same both he, *Cyprian* and others, frequently use in the same sense; which I note the rather, because of that absurd and impious doctrine, so currant amongst the *Papists*, and which they pretend to derive from these very Fathers, that by works of penance *compensation* is made to God for the debt of punishment that was contracted, whereby at least the temporal penalties due to sin are *meritoriously* expiated and done away. But this besides that it is flatly repugnant to the doctrine of *antiquity*, how much 'tis derogatory to the *honour* of divine grace, and the *infinite* satisfaction of the *Son* of God, I shall not now stand to dispute. To return therefore; This term of penance was usually exacted with great rigour, and seldom dispensed with, no indulgence or admission being granted till the full time was compleated. Therefore *Cyprian* smartly chides with some *Presbyters* who had taken upon them to absolve the lapsed before their time, and that whereas in lesser offences men were obliged to the just time of penance, and to observe the order of discipline, they in a crime of so heinous

*Epist. 9. p. 21.*

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a nature had hand over head admitted Part 3. them to Communion before they had gone through their penance and confession, and fulfilled the regular customs and orders of the Church.

The time of penance being ended, they addressed themselves to the Governours of the Church for *Absolution*, hereupon their repentance was taken into examination, and being found to be sincere and real, they were openly re-admitted into the Church by the imposition of the hands of the Clergy, the party to be absolv'd kneeling down between the knees of the *Bishop*, or in his absence of the *Presbyter*, who laying his hand upon his head solemnly blessed and absolved him, whence doubtless sprang that absurd and senseless calumny which the *Heathens* laid upon the *Christians*, that they were wont *Sacerdotis colere genitalia*; so forward were they to catch at any reproach which the most crooked and malicious invention could insinuate and suggest: The penitent being absolved, was received with the universal joy and acclamation of the people, as one returned from the state of the *dead* (for such 'tis plain they accounted them

*Cyp. Epist. 11. p. 24.*

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while

Part 3. while under a state of guilt, especially the lapsed, as *Cyprian* positively affirms them to be) being embraced by his brethren, who blessed God for his return, and many times *wept* for the joy of his recovery, who upon his absolution was now restored to a participation of the *Lords* Supper, and to all other acts of Church-Communion, which by his crimes he had forfeited, and from which he had been suspended, till he had given satisfactory evidence of his repentance, and purpose to persevere under the exact discipline of Christianity. This was the ordinary way wherein they treated *criminals* in the Primitive Church; but in cases of necessity (such as that of danger of death) they did not rigidly exact the set time of penance, but absolved the person, that so he might dye in the peace and communion of the Church. The story of *Serapion* at *Alexandria* we have formerly mentioned, who being suddainly surpriz'd with death while he was under the state of penance, and not being able to dye till he had received absolution, sent for the Presbyter to testify his repentance and absolve him; but he being also at that time sick, sent him

*Id. Epist.*  
27. p. 39.  
*Vid. Epist.*  
46. p. 60.

*Euseb. H.*  
*Eccles. lib. 6.*  
c. 44. p.  
346.

him a part of the *Consecrated* elements, Part 3. which he had by him, upon the receiving whereof he breathed out his soul with great comfort and satisfaction that he now died in Communion with the Church.

The truth is, the time of these *Penitentiary* humiliations often varied according to the circumstances of the case, it being much in the power of the Bishops and Governours of the Church to shorten the time, and sooner to absolve and take them into Communion, the *Medicinal* vertue of repentance lying not in the *duration*, but the *manner* of it, as *S. Basil* speaks in this very case. A learned man has observed to my hand four particular cases wherein they were wont to *anticipate* the usual time of absolution: The first was (what I observed but now) when persons were in danger of death; this was agreed to by *Cyprian*, and the Martyrs, and the *Roman* Clergy, and the Letters (as he tells us) sent through the whole World to all the Churches; this also was provided for by the great Council of *Nice*, That as for those that were at the point of death, the ancient and *Canonical* rule should be observed still, that when

*Can. 2. ad*  
*Amphil.*

*Forbes. in.*  
*fruct. Hist.*  
*Th. lib. 12.*  
c. 7. p. 674.

*Epist. 52.*  
*ad Antonian.* p. 67.

*Can. 13.*

Part 3. any were at the point of death they should by no means be deprived of the last and necessary *Viaticum*, i.e. the Holy Sacrament, which was their great *Symbol* of Communion. And here for the better understanding some passages it may not be unuseful once for all to add this note, that whereas many of the ancient *Canons* (of the *Illiberine* Council especially) positively deny communion to some sorts of penitents even at the *hour* of death, they are not to be understood, as if the Church mercifully denied all *indulgence* and absolution to any penitent at such a time, but only that it was thought fit to deny them the use of the *Eucharist*, which was the great *pledge* and testimony of their communion with the Church.

The second case was in time of *eminent* persecution, conceiving it but fit at such times to dispense with the rigour of the discipline, that so *Penitents* being received to the *Grace* of *Christ*, and to the communion of the Church, might be the better armed and enabled to *contend earnestly* for the Faith. This was resolved and agreed upon by *Cyprian*, and a whole Council of *African* Bishops, whereof they give an account to

Epist. 54.  
p. 76.

to *Cornelius* Bishop of *Rome*, that in Part 3. regard persecution was drawing on, they held it convenient and necessary, that communion and reconciliation should be granted to the *lapsed*, not only to those that were a *dying*, but even to the *living*, that they might not be left naked and unarmed in the time of *battel*, but be able to defend themselves with the shield of *Christ's* body and blood. For how (*say they*) shall we teach and persuade them to shed *their* blood in the Cause of *Christ*, if we deny them the benefit of *his* blood? How shall we make them fit to drink the *cup* of martyrdom, unless we first admit them in the Church to a right of communication to drink of the *cup* of the blood of *Christ*? A third case wherein they relaxed the severity of this discipline was, when great *multitudes* were concerned, or such persons as were likely to draw great numbers after them; in this case they thought it *prudent* and reasonable to deal with persons by somewhat milder and gentler methods, lest by holding them to terms of rigour and austerity, they should provoke them to fly off either to *Heathens* or to *Hereticks*. This course



Part 3. *course Cyprian* tells us he took, he complied with the necessity of the times, and like a wise Physician yielded a little to the humour of the patient, to provide for his health, and to cure his wounds; and quotes herein the example of *Cornelius* of *Rome*, who dealt just so with *Trophimus* and his party; and elsewhere, that out of an earnest desire to regain and resettle the brethren, he was ready to connive at many things, and to forgive any thing, and did not examine and exact the greatest crimes with that full power and severity that he might, inasmuch that he thought he did almost *offend* himself in an over-liberal remitting other mens *offences*. Lastly, in absolving penitents, and mitigating the rigours of their repentance, they used to have respect to the *person* of the penitent, to his *Dignity*, or *Age*, or *Infirmity*, or the *course* of his past life; sometimes to the greatness of his *Humility*, and the impression which his present condition made upon him. Thus the *Ancyran* Council impowers Bishops to examine the manner of mens Conversion and Repentance, and accordingly either to moderate, or enlarge their time of penance, but especially

*Epist. 55.  
p. 85.*

*Can. 5. vid.  
Conc. Nic.  
cen. Can.  
12.*

cially that regard be had to their Part 3. Conversation both before and since their offence, that so clemency and indulgence may be extended to them. So for the case of persons of more than ordinary *rank* and *dignity*, or of a more tender and delicate *Constitution*, *Chrysostome* determines, that in chastising and punishing their offences they be dealt withal in a more peculiar manner than other men, lest by holding them under over-rigorous penalties they should be tempted to fly out into despair, and so throwing off the reins of modesty, and the care of their own happiness and salvation, should run headlong into all manner of vice and wickedness. So wisely did the prudence and piety of those times deal with offenders, neither letting the reins so loose as to patronize *presumption*, or encourage any man to sin, nor yet holding them so strait, as to drive men into *despair*.

The fourth and last circumstance concerns the *Persons* by whom this discipline was administered; now though 'tis true that this affair was managed in the *publick* Congregation, and seldom or never done without the consent and

*De sacer-  
dot. lib. 2.  
c. 4. p. 18.  
Tom. 4.*

appro-

Part 3. approbation of the people (as *Cyprian* more than once and again expressly tells us) yet was it ever accounted a *ministerial* act; and properly belonged to them. *Tertullian* speaking of Church censures, adds, that the *Elders* that are approv'd, and have attain'd that honour, not by purchase but testimony, *preside* therein; and *Firmilian* Bishop of *Cæsarea Cappadocia* in a Letter to *S. Cyprian* speaking of the *Majores natu*, the *Seniors* that preside in the Church, tells us, that to them belongs the power of *baptizing*, *imposing hands*, (*viz.* in penance) and *ordination*. By the *Bishop* it was primarily and usually administred, the determining the time and manner of repentance, and the conferring pardon upon the penitent sinner, being acts of the *highest* power and jurisdiction, and therefore reckon'd to appertain to the highest order in the Church. Therefore 'tis provided by the *Illiberine* Council, that penance shall be prescribed by none but the *Bishop*; only in case of necessity, such as sickness, and danger of death, by leave and command from the Bishop, the *Presbyter* or *Deacon* might impose penance and absolve. Accordingly we find

*Inter Epist.*  
*Cyprian. p.*  
146.

*Can. 32. p.*  
40.

find *Cyprian* amongst other directions to his Clergy how to carry themselves towards the lapsed, giving them this, that if any were over-taken with sickness, or present danger, they should not stay for his coming, but the sick person should make confession of his sins to the next *Presbyter*, or, if a *Presbyter* could not be met with, to a *Deacon*, that so laying hands upon him he might depart in the *peace* of the Church.

But though while the number of Christians was small, and the bounds of particular Churches little, Bishops were able to manage these and other parts of their office in their own persons, yet soon after the task began to grow too great for them; and therefore about the time of the *Decian* persecution, when Christians were very much multiplyed, and the number of the lapsed great, it seem'd good to the prudence of the Church partly for the ease of the Bishop, and partly to provide for the modesty of persons in being brought before the whole Church to confess every crime, to appoint a *publick penitentiary* (some holy, grave, and prudent *Presbyter*) whose office it was to take the confession of those sins which

Part 3.  
*Epist. 12.*  
*p. 25. Vid.*  
*Conc. 2.*  
*Carthag.*  
*Can. 4.*

Part 3. which persons had committed after *baptism*, and by prayers, fastings, and other exercises of mortification to prepare them for absolution. He was a kind of *Censor morum*, to enquire into the lives of *Christians*, to take an account of their failures, and to direct and dispose them to repentance. This Office continued for some hundreds of years, till it was abrogated by *Nectarius* (S. *Chrysostomes* predecessor in the See of *Constantinople*) upon the occasion of a notorious scandal that arose about it. A woman of good rank and quality had been with the *Penitentiary*, and confessed all her sins committed since baptism; he enjoyn'd her to give up herself to fasting and prayer; but not long after she came to him, and confessed, that while she was conversant in the Church to attend upon those holy exercises, she had been tempted to commit folly and leudness with a *Deacon* of the Church, whereupon the *Deacon* was immediately cast out; but the people being exceedingly troubled at the scandal, and the Holy Order hereby exposed to the scorn and derision of the Gentiles, *Nectarius* by the advice of *Eudamon* a *Presbyter* of that Church wholly

*Socrat. H. Eccl. lib. 5. c. 19. p. 278. Confer. Sozom. lib. 7. c. 16. p. 726.*

wholly took away the Office of the publick *Penitentiary*, leaving every one to the care and liberty of his own conscience to prepare himself for the Holy Sacrament. This account *Socrates* assures us he had from *Eudamon's* own mouth; and *Sozomen* adds, that almost all Bishops follow'd *Nectarius* his example in abrogating this Office.

But besides the ordinary and standing office of the Clergy, we find even some of the Laity, the *Martyrs* and *Confessors*, that had a considerable hand in *absolving* penitents, and restoring them to the communion of the Church. For the understanding of which we are to know, that as the Christians of those times had a mighty reverence for *Martyrs* and *Confessors* as the great Champions of Religion, so the *Martyrs* took upon them to dispense in extraordinary cases; for it was very customary in times of persecution for those who through fear of suffering had lapsed into Idolatry to make their address to the *Martyrs* in prison, and to beg peace of them, that they might be restored to the Church; who considering their petitions, and weighing the circumstances of their case did frequent-

Part 3. quently grant their requests, mitigate their penance, and by a *note* signed under their hands signify what they had done to the Bishop, who taking an account of their condition, absolved and admitted them to communion. Of these *Libelli*, or Books granted by the *Martyrs* to the *lapsed*, there is mention in *Cyprian* at every turn, who complains they were come to that excessive number, that *thousands* were granted almost every day; this many of them took upon them to do with great smartness and authority, and without that respect that was due to the Bishops, as appears from the *note* written to *Cyprian* by *Lucian* in the name of the *Confessors*; which because 'tis but short, and withall shews the form and manners of those *pacifick Libells*, it may not be amiss to set it down; and thus it runs; *All the Confessors to Cyprian the Bishop, Greeting: Know that we have granted peace to all those, of whom you have had an account what they have done, how they have behaved themselves since the commission of their crimes; and we would that these presents should by you be imparted to the rest of the Bishops: We wish you to maintain peace with the holy Martyrs:*

*Epist. 10.*  
*11, 12. &*  
*alibi.*

*Epist. 14.*  
*p. 27.*

*Epist. 16.*  
*p. 29.*

*Martyrs: Written by Lucian; of the Part 3. Clergy, the Exorcist and Reader being present.* This was looked upon as very peremptory and magisterial, and therefore of this confidence and presumption, and carelessness in promiscuously granting these *letters of peace*, *Epist. 22. Cyprian* not without reason complains *p. 34.* in an Epistle to the Clergy of *Rome*.

Besides these *Libells* granted by the Martyrs, there were other *Libelli* granted by Heathen-Magistrates (of which it may not be impertinent to speak a little) whence the *lapsed* that had had them were commonly called *Libellatici*, and they were of several sorts; some writing their names in *Libellis* in Books, and professing themselves to worship *Jupiter, Mars*, and the rest of the Heathen Gods, presented them to the Magistrate; and these did really sacrifice, and pollute not their souls only but their hands and their lips with unlawful sacrifices, as the Clergy of *Rome* expresses it in a letter to *S. Cyprian*; these were called *Thurificati*, and *Sacrificati*, from their having offered incense and sacrifices. Somewhat of this nature was that *Libell* that *Pliny* speaks of in his Epistle to the

*Epist. 31.*  
*p. 44.*  
*Ad Antonian. Epist.*  
*52. p. 66,*  
*67.*

*Epist. 97.*  
*lib. 10.*

Part 3. Emperour *Trajan*, presented to him while he was *Proconsul* of *Bithynia*, containing a Catalogue of the names of many, some whereof had been accused to be *Christians* and denied it, others confessed they had been so some years since but had renounc'd it; all of them adoring the Images of the gods, and the Emperours Statue, offering sacrifice, and *blaspheming Christ*; and were accordingly dismissed and released by him. Others there were who did not *themselves* sign or present any such *Libells*, but some Heathen-friends for them (and sometimes out of kindness they were encouraged to it by the Magistrates themselves) and were hereupon released out of prison, and had the favour not to be urged to sacrifice. Nay, *Dionysius* of *Alexandria* speaks of some Masters, who to escape themselves compelled their *servants* to do sacrifice for them, to whom he appoints a three years penance for that sinful compliance and dissimulation. A third sort there was, who finding the edge and keenness of their *Judges* was to be taken off with a sum of *money*, freely confessed to them that they were *Christians* and could not sacrifice,

Epist. 31.  
p. 44.

Can. 7. Synod. Tom.  
2. p. 1. p.  
12.

Part 3. crifice, pray'd them to give them a *Libell* of dismissal, for which they would give them a suitable reward: These were most properly called *Libellatici* and *Libellati*. *Cyprian* acquaints us with the manner of their address to the Heathen Magistrate, bringing in such a person thus speaking for himself: I had both *read* and *learnt* from the Sermons of the *Bishop*, that the servant of God is not to *sacrifice* to Idols, nor to *worship* Images; wherefore that I might not do what was unlawful, having an opportunity of getting a *Libell* offered, (which yet I would not have accepted had it not offered it self) I went to the Magistrate, or caused another to go in my name and tell him, that I was a *Christian*, and that it was not lawful for me to sacrifice, nor to approach the altars of the Devils, that therefore I would give him a reward to excuse me, that I might not be urged to what was unlawful. These though not altogether so bad as the *Sacrificati*, yet *Cyprian* charges as guilty of *implicit* Idolatry, having defiled their consciences with the purchase of these Books, and done that by *consent*, which others had *actually* done.

Part 3.  
Annal. Ec-  
cl. ad Ann.  
CCLIII  
Num. XX.  
de seqq.  
tom. 2.

I know *Baronius* will needs have it (and boasts that all that had written before him were mistaken in the case) that these *Libellatici* were not exempted from denying Christ, nor gave money to that end; that they only requested of the Magistrate, that they might not be compelled to offer sacrifice, that they were ready to *deny Christ*, and were willing to give him a reward to dispence with them only so far, and to furnish them with a *Libell* of security, and that they did really deny him before they obtained their *Libell*. But nothing can be more plain both from this and several other passages in *Cyprian*, than that they did not either *publicly* or *privately* sacrifice to Idols, or actually *deny* Christ; and therefore bribed the Magistrate, that they might not be forced to do what was unlawful. And hence *Cyprian* argues them as guilty by their *wills* and *consent*, and that they had *implicitly* denied Christ, how? by *actually* doing it? No, but by *pretending* they had done what others were really guilty of. Certainly the *Cardinals* mistake arose from a not right understanding the several sorts of the *Libellatici*, the first where-

De Lapsis,  
p. 176.

of

of (as we have shewn) did *actually* sacrifice and deny Christ. Part 3.

And now having taken this view of the severity of discipline in the ancient Church, nothing remains but to *admire* and *imitate* their piety and integrity, their infinite hatred of sin, their care and zeal to keep up that strictness and purity of manners that had rendred their Religion so renowned and triumphant in the world: A discipline; which how happy were it for the *Christian* world, were it again resettled in its due power and vigour, which particularly is the *Judgment* and *desire* of our *own Church* concerning the solemn *Quadragesimal* Penances and Humiliations; In the *Primitive Church* (say the *Preface* to the Communion) *there was a godly Discipline, that at the beginning of Lent, such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend: Which said Discipline it is much to be wished might be restored again.*

F I N I S.



A  
Chronological Index  
OF THE  
AUTHOURS

Cited in this Book,

According to the Vulgar Computation ;  
with an account of the Editions of  
their Works.

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Apoſtolorū	}		} Par. 1618
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	}		} Oxon. 1633
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Clemens Romanus		70 Epist. ad Cor.	Antw. 1634
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Ignatius Antiochenus		101 Epistolæ.	Lond. 1647
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Palladius

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